# THE BRITISH IN INDIA

A STUDY IN IMPERIALISM

K.K. AZIZ

## THE AUTHOR

KHURSHEED KAMAL AZIZ was born in December 1927 at village Ballamabad in the Lyallpur district of the Punjab, Pakistan, and was educated at the Forman Christian College and the Government College, Lahore, and at the Victoria University of Manchester in England. He has taught at Government College, Lahore (1953-57) and at the University of Khartoum (1963-73). In 1959-60 he was Research Fellow in Political Science at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London. He served as Deputy Historian to the Government of Pakistan in 1961-63. At present he is Chairman of the National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, Islamabad.

Among his other publications are:

*Britain and Muslim India* (London, 1963), *Some Problems of Research in Modern History* (Rawalpindi, 1966), *The Making of Pakistan* (London, 1967), *Ameer Ali : His Life and Work* (Lahore, 1968), *The Historical Background of Pakistan, 1857-1947* (Karachi, 1970), *The All India Muslim Conference* (Karachi, 1972), *The Indian Khilafat Movement* (Karachi, 1972), *Britain and Pakistan* (Islamabad, 1974), and *Party Politics in Pakistan, 1947-58* (Islamabad, 1976).

Historical Studies (Muslim India) Series : 1

# THE BRITISH IN INDIA

A Study in Imperialism

# THE BRITISH IN INDIA

*A Study in Imperialism*

K. K. AZIZ

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESEARCH
ISLAMABAD
1976

PRINTED BY :
MIRZA MOHAMMAD SADIQ AT THE RIPON PRINTING PRESS LTD., LAHORE
PUBLISHED BY :
THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESEARCH, P.O. BOX 1230,
ISLAMABAD (PAKISTAN)

TO

the memory of

JAHANARA

to whom I owe whatever is good in me

Great God ! I pray that Thou wilt grant her peace and joy

And darken not her days, Oh Lord, for they are Thine

# PREFACE

British imperialism might have been a phantom, a fantasy, a mere formula, perhaps even a fiction; but it was also a stark reality, a grand performance, a brutal fact, a palpable existence. There is much truth in the sally of a wilt: one Englishman, an idiot; two Englishmen, a great deal of sport; three Englishmen, the British Empire. There was once a time when imperialism came to the British as an instinct and an impulse. It achieved much and changed the history of several parts of the globe. It was neither an impeccable virtue nor an unmitigated evil. Whatever it was, today, it is but an echo and keeps company with the dust of Athens and the shade of Rome. Yesterday it strutted the world stage in justifiable pride and unjustifiable arrogance. Today it is a memory. Tomorrow it will be a dream, and the day after no more than a ripple on the tides of eternity.

Every respectable general library has a couple of shelves stocked with books on British imperialism. The number of volumes available on the history of British rule in India exceeds the five-figure mark. Historians, political scientists, economists, administrators, soldiers, politicians, journalists, Britons, Indians, Pakistanis, Americans, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians—all varieties of professions, nationalities and religions have written on British imperialism and on British dominion in India. The phenomenon of the British empire has evoked every sentiment from unstinted admiration and unlimited praise through balanced scrutiny and objective narrative to vibrant hatred and unprintable invective.

And yet, as far as I know, no study has been attempted by a Briton

or a non-Briton of the British imperial mind and its impact on the Indian situation, of the British imperial theory and its practical application to British India, of the British imperial principle and its working out in the Indian environment. There are several books on the nature and history of British imperialism, and many more on the rise and fall (even fulfilment) of British rule in India; but none on the relationship of the two. The present work is a modest attempt to fill this gap.

For some of my readers the subject of this book may be sensitive and the treatment may arouse in them some latent capacity for discreet condemnation or indiscreet approval. They must remember that an historian is a prophet in reverse. He uncovers the past and asks his readers to see the yesterdays of time in slightly better perspective. They must also remember that no historian can be impartial, only intellectually honest. Impartiality is a dream, honesty a duty. British imperialism was neither a cause nor a crime, but a great political and historical event with the nobility of a cause and the ignominy of a crime. What I have tried to do is to understand the whole phenomenon and to share this understanding with my audience.

As no study of British imperialism can be comprehensible without some knowledge of the history of British empire-making, chapter 1 provides a brief account of the origin and growth of the imperial advance from the Elizabethan era onwards and shows how the rising tide of imperialism became a part of British political and social thinking. The next two chapters study the imperial *idea* in Britain in its various aspects: the influence or the lack of it of Greek, Roman and modern European imperial theory, the complexion of home government, the means and instruments of making and popularizing an empire, the technique of imperial rule, the men who pushed the imperial wheel, the play of economics, race, Christianity, self-righteousness, preventive self-defence, character building and the idea of progress, and imperialism as faith. Chapter 4 casts a look at the imperial *mind*, its political lineaments, its major exponents like John Ruskin, Palmerston, John Bright, John Bryce, Sir Charles Dilke, James Froude, Thomas Carlyle, Sir John Seeley, Cecil Rhodes, Gladstone, Disraeli, Cromer and Curzon, and its recruiting-cum-training ground in Jowett's Oxford. Chapter 5 surveys the imperial *imagination* as it flowered into a literature of the empire, particularly into Anglo-Indian letters.

Chapter 6 examines the imperial *presence*, *i.e.*, the anxiety to keep British India safe from other predatory powers, the devising of an administrative machinery to protect India against internal decay and disorder, the life and work of the Indian Civil Service, the intellectual and literary

record of the men who ran the Indian services, and the pranks and eccentricities of some celebrated civilians. The next two chapters make a rather detailed study of the imperial *outlook*: the background and nature of the British-Indian encounter, the role of the Utilitarian school and of the Christian missionaries, the British view of Hinduism and Islam, the racial bias of the rulers, their conviction of their own superiority, and their illusion of an empire which touched eternity.

Chapter 9 assesses the imperial *impact*, the scale and momentum of British influence on Indian social life, education, language and literature, and the shaking of the Indian mind and character under the sweeping storm of the coming of the West. The last chapter describes the imperial *dilemma* which encompassed the makers of British imperial theory when the theory had to become practice in the Indian scene.

The interested reader should perhaps be reminded that the Longer Notes placed between the last chapter and the appendices are an integral part of the text and ought to be read with it. They have been put where they are because I could not think of a way of integrating them in the body of the book without doing violence to the scheme and flow of the text. The biographical notes are meant to provide essential information on the major characters who make up the British imperial roll. A rather long bibliography is provided for the benefit of those who might be attracted by the present study to look beyond its confines.

I should like to acknowledge my thanks to my friend H. J. Hanham, Professor of History at Harvard University, for taking the trouble of reading the manuscript of this book and making several instructive suggestions.

Islamabad, *K. K. AZIZ*
*6 September 1976*

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

# The Imperial Tide

When a people are young they create myths and sing songs. Mythology and poetry spring from the vigour of will and the freshness of mind; they are signs of confidence, security and joy. When a people are old they produce philosophy and write prose. Speculation and logic betray doubt and decadence; they are signs of uncertainty, insecurity and misgiving. In his youth man dreams dreams, sees visions, chants poetry, fights, flirts, loves, thinks much of himself, and tries to drain the cup of life to the very lees. In old age his dreams are fled, even his illusions have left him, ambitions have either been fulfilled, and now forgotten, as a once beautiful past or remained unfulfilled and with their thought the sting returns, instead of poetry he reads philosophy, cold reason takes the place of hearty laughter, the closing years turn the *hubris* of youth into the humility of age, cares and doubts come crowding in and the frail soul takes refuge in rationalization and justification. So it is with ideas.

When imperialism was young and eager nobody bothered to justify it. The intrepid explorer annexed an island first and informed his sovereign afterwards. The commander conquered a province as large as England and then at his leisure penned a report to London which rarely wasted words on explanation, justification or apology. Mercifully for him, communications were long, tenuous and difficult. Was he not the man on the spot on whom London must depend and rely or let the empire go to pieces? If he asked for orders and sat back waiting for an answer there would be no decision to take and no instructions to follow by the time the answer came in about a year's time. So it came

to pass that the agent of a trading company or of the government became the ruler of vast and strange tracts of land which he conquered, governed and in time came to love. And this was as it should have been. Explanations were to be left to others. He would act and do things and achieve, and leave the defence to his overlords in London and criticism to the disputatious members of parliament who knew not one part of the empire from another. Empire-building was a thing to be sung in songs and enshrined in myths. It was a thing of pleasure, hope, cheer and courage. It was to be enjoyed to the full as long as it lasted, and why should it not last many hundreds of years!

But that which is born must one day die, so say the sages. And a time came, perhaps sooner than expected, when the tide of imperialism was at the ebb. Times had changed, so had ideas, concepts, conditions, hearts of men. The tide receded, drying up confidence and hope, laying bare all the fears and weaknesses, all the doubts and misgivings, which the waves of power and dominion had hidden from their eyes. The pain of consciousness and much else returned, and with it the need for applying reason to what once had been an ecstasy. The idea of progress had once been the faith of the nation and had turned the imperialists into ardent missionaries. Now this faith weakened and gradually disappeared, robbing the faithful of all optimism, imagination and will. No longer was man considered to be perfectible, no longer was it deemed England's duty to train Asia and Africa in the arts of civilization and good government. The mystical appeal of imperialism, which once made all tories and liberals and fabians the upholders of the right of the English race to rule the earth, moved the heart no more.

The analysis of faith is one unmistakable proof of its loss. The moment the idea of examining with a view to justifying or condemning entered, the moment rules of logic were applied to its principles, the charm and beauty, the very existence, of imperialism melted away. The joyful poets of empire were succeeded by political philosophers who dissected imperialism as if it were a frog or a rabbit. The imaginative novelists, the myth-makers, gave way to critical observers for whom it was another 'ism' to write large critiques on. From being the very blood of a nation it had become an academic discipline. When looked at through the prism of reason much was discovered in imperialism that was bad or simply foolish. From out of the mists of an uplifting dream arose the foreboding spectre of reality to frighten the imperialist, to gladden the anti-imperialist, and to harry those who still ruled parts of the empire and in their innocence still clung to the original, pristine faith that every Englishman should assume rule over others like a cross of duty

and exercise it with the passion of a fanatic.

* * * *

British imperialism has a long history. In the virile Elizabethan age seamen explored the high seas and captured markets and ships full of gold. Trading companies were founded and the mercantilist theory of state soon made the flag follow the trade. North America and the West Indies fell into British hands and the First British Empire was born. It was an empire of settlement, the immigrants from the home country peopling the colonies. The war of American independence and the subsequent loss of the thirteen colonies put an end to this Empire. But on the heels of its death came the birth of the Second British Empire which was initially based on an aggressive policy of trade with the far east. Before long, however, trade had led to a long series of territorial gains effected by the joint efforts of ambitious traders, zealous missionaries, independent-minded governors and army commanders, men moved by humanitarian feelings and men actuated by pure greed.

The British government pretended that nothing was happening which concerned it and that the doings and misdoings of private citizens and share-holders in joint stock companies were not its responsibility. This was only half the truth, for the British parliament passed half a dozen important laws regulating the affairs of India before the Crown took over the rule of the country. But it created the myth that the empire was gained in a fit of absence of mind. Whatever the truth, when the mind was present it had to take notice of what had been done in its so profitable an absence. At last the Government looked at what somnolence had brought forth, marvelled at the result and acknowledged that an empire existed. Then arose the problem of evolving a theory to explain, and if necessary to defend, the empire. By a curious inversion of events action had preceded thought. Imperialism had consolidated its material gains before the philosophy of imperialism put forth its appearance. This was a cause of strength as well as of weakness. The strength arose from the confidence and power of the doctrine vouchsafed by the achievements on which it was based. The weakness lay in the inflexibility of a theory which was created with the specific purpose of vindicating or explaining the accomplished fact.

After the Napoleonic Wars there had been two schools of thought about the colonies. The one did not talk or think much about the matter, but had made up its mind to maintain what remained of the First Empire and also to retain and consolidate the fruits of the Anglo-French wars. This we may call Old Toryism. Bentham was the prophet of the second school. People like Brougham and Cobden took his message

'emancipate your colonies' to heart. Colonies, they said, had been valuable for the control of their trade. The acceptance of the doctrine of free trade had rendered them profitless. To keep them any longer for no purpose and to misgovern them would earn Britain nothing but resentment and animosity of the colonies. This was the Benthamite Liberal school.

The dry wind of conscious imperialism had not yet begun to blow. A few more years were left to the anti-imperialists. In the 1840s this attitude is illustrated by the radical ideas of Sir George Cornewell Lewis. Far from expounding the retention of the empire he was in favour of urging the colonies to go their way to independence as the old thirteen colonies had moved away to found the United States of America. The only sensible direction in which colonial policy should be developed was emancipation and national independence.

The arresting figure of Goldwin Smith appears in the 1860s to meet the challenge of empire on purely economic grounds. Echoing Bentham and Cobden, he thought that commercial monopoly and the accruing profit were the only factors which had at one time made the colonies worth their while. They were held in dependence so that their trade could be controlled and Britain could increase its riches. But with the trade becoming free there was no legitimate cause for helping 'this expensive and perilous connection' to survive. A modern historian has ruefully characterized this idea as 'a narrow commercialism that set up direct monetary gain as the only criterion'.[1]

Professor Trevelyan sets the rather late date of 1886 for the arrival of imperialism as a political creed.[2] As a matter of fact the high tide of imperialism had started to flow in the 1860s and by the 1870s it had risen to a level where much of public opinion and political policy was affected by it. But in another respect Trevelyan's time-scale is correct. Imperialism did not gain complete or official recognition in the 1870s or even in the 1880s. These two decades saw the active conflict between Little Englandism and Imperialism, though the discerning eye could already see which was going to win. Without a doubt, in the 1890s the triumph of imperialism was complete and the British nation relaxed in the enjoyment of an empire the possession of which was not only a matter of correct pride but also one of rare virtue.

But alas! imperialism had arrived too late. The idea of territorial expansion won official respect and honour only after the great bulk of actual expansion had taken place. Not only that. In fact, by this date

1. A. P. Newton, *A Hundred Years of British Empire* (Duckworth, London, 1940), p. 232.
2. G. M. Trevelyan, *British History in the Nineteenth Century and After* (1937 ed.), p. 397.

the long and drawn-out liquidation of the empire had begun. Already in 1867 Canada had become a Dominion. In a few more years Australia was to gain a similar status, and New Zealand was to follow suit. South Africa came next. In India the nucleus of a nationalist movement had already been born in the 1880s and was soon to begin to make demands yet unheard of in the empire. Thus the white colonies were already free or on the very verge of becoming free when imperialism entered the scene.

In talking of imperialism, therefore, we must not lose sight of this significant fact. In ordinary language imperialism means the rule or dominion of one country over another country or area. The rule of one race over another is not an essential part of imperialism in its lexicographic sense. In practical terms, however, when we are studying British imperialism, particularly in the imperial age which began around the 1870s, we mean the doctrine that the rule of the English race over other races of Asian and African origin was something desir- able, profitable, humanitarian and moral, that it was a proof of the superiority of one particular race over all others, and that both Providence and Science were on the side of the ruling race. The ingredients of this doctrine will be studied in detail in the following chapters on the imperial idea.

* * * *

Imperialism wore the aspect of a mission to many of those who heralded the age of imperialism in British history. It was a vocation, a divinely-appointed task, for the success of which self-sacrifice was essential, and so was confidence in one's superiority and ability to accomplish what the right and the just course demanded.

Lord Randolph Churchill, that magnificent star in the Tory firmament which set too early, believed that the British must fulfil 'their great, their proud, their peculiar mission' of carrying to their overseas subjects the blessings of civilization, freedom and peace.[1] Lord Rosebery once described the British Empire as 'the greatest secular agency for good the world has ever seen'. Identical ideas were expressed by Lord Salisbury. Once he referred to the application of European standards to Africa as 'a great force—a great civilizing, Christianizing force'. In a speech in Guildhall in 1897 he explained that 'we do not want to take territory simply because it may look well to paint it red upon the map. . . . We wish to extend the commerce, the trade, the industry and the civilization of mankind'.[2]

1. W. S. Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill* (London, 1906 ed.), Vol. I, p. 156.
2. Both quotations are from A. L. Kennedy, *Salisbury, 1830—1903 : Portrait of a Statesman* (Murray, London, 1953), pp. 208, 300.

It was left to Benjamin Disraeli to lead the English nation to the fount of imperialism and to persuade his people of the rightness of the doctrine and the glory of its practical manifestations. His new interest in imperial affairs first appears in his speeches made around 1868, and it had its roots in his conviction that England had been losing ground among the Powers of the world by her hesitation, indecision and procrastination.

But it was his speech at the Crystal Palace of 1872 which sounded the flourish of trumpets heralding in the imperial age. He was then the leader of the Opposition and in this speech, delivered in magnificent surroundings before a glittering array of Tory chiefs and leaders, he outlined, in fine eloquence supported by vigour, the policy he would follow if he became the prime minister. The core of his programme related to integration and reconstruction of what he called 'the Empire of England'.

Two years later he took office. The imperial record of his administration of 1874-80 is impressive. He purchased the control of the Suez Canal, a transaction which was destined to bring much grief to another Tory prime minister eighty years later. He made the Queen the Empress of India, and, while introducing the Royal Titles Bill in Parliament in 1876, pointed out like a proud courtier that 'The Queen of England has become the sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental States'. He championed Turkey against the might of Russia on the plea that a strong Ottoman Empire was necessary to the safety of India. (All in all a considerable portion of the earth was to be conquered or fortified to keep India safe!) With France he established the dual control over Egyptian finances. He annexed the Transvaal and conquered the Zulus. He also tried to subjugate Afghanistan.

The Tories did not forget what Disraeli had told them at Crystal Palace. Every succeeding Tory prime minister did what he could to make Disraeli's dreams come true. Salisbury's government of 1886-92 secured several new colonies in Africa, and that of 1895-1902 reconquered the Sudan and the South African Boer Republics.

Nor did Gladstone's several terms of office mean a diminution of empire or a stop to its expansion, notwithstanding his censure of Tory imperial policy. Much was added to the imperial sway when the Liberals were in power. The men on the spot and the pro-consuls assured the continuous spread of red colour on the map of the world no matter which party formally controlled the imperial affairs of the state.

* * * *

It is obvious that this rapidly rising tide of imperialism did not owe

its existence either to the teachings of any one party or to any single outstanding factor. Disraeli's speeches of the early 'seventies were not the harbinger but the crystallization of this new feeling. The old anti-imperialism of the 'forties and 'fifties was a thing of the past. Now those who opposed the mounting tide no longer did so out of antagonism to the imperial connection. They merely disapproved of the methods employed by the imperialists or feared that the measures being contemplated or taken would not conduce to the solidarity and consolidation of the empire. From the 'seventies onwards the Englishman, whatever his political convictions or party loyalties, was an imperialist at heart. Imperialism became a sort of public religion to which practically every one subscribed, because he found something in it to please his heart (the common man), to ease his conscience (the missionary), to enrich his pocket (the trader), to satisfy his curiosity (the explorer), to fulfil his earthly mission (the upholder of progress and civilization), to win laurels (the soldier and the governor), to improve his family (the younger sons of the aristocracy), and to indulge his ego (the white man's burden). It did good to his heart to see that his nation could accomplish so much. He liked his wars to be fought far away from his island home if it was possible; the far-flung empire made it possible. He also liked his wars to be fought in the name of God; the imperial pro-consul-cum-thinker offered him the intensely pleasing revelation that to fight for the empire was to advance the ways of Providence. He also liked his wars to be won by his own side; Western superiority in arms combined with the decadence and disunity of the races to be conquered guaranteed victory. The conversion of the Englishman was complete. It would have been astonishing had it not been so.

But the Englishman is a cool, sluggish, conservative political animal, and it is not easy to move him. To think that he was made to embrace a new doctrine of such inflexible dimensions by the eloquence of a Disraeli or the exploits of a Clive or the poetry of a Kipling or the prose of a Henty is to misread his nature. Only a confluence of factors and incidents of varied nature could have transmuted his phlegm and his apathy into a vitality and a flame. A great deal must have happened in the second half of the nineteenth century to bring about this metamorphosis in his outlook and to create a new public opinion which made the nation look outwards and far into the distance beyond the horizon. What caused this revolutionary change in him?

Till about the middle of the nineteenth century, thanks to the early advent of the industrial revolution, British commercial success had not been questioned. The smoking chimneys of England produced good

stuff and British naval supremacy guaranteed that it reached foreign markets safely and punctually. There was no competition and hardly any with which the country could not cope. But gradually this confidence in the capacity to survive foreign competition was weakened. Other advanced countries were beginning to gather the fruits of industrial progress. Competition was growing apace and no longer did the English product command a sale because it was English. The monopoly of markets was fast disappearing. So now the old argument that colonial markets were useful and profitable to an extent to which other markets were not began to assume a new and vital importance. For a country which lived on the export of finished products this argument left little room for doubt or debate. If England was to live with honour (riches inevitably bring honour) she must create markets for her goods, or capture them from their rightful owners, or snatch them from other imperial masters. In the expansion and consolidation of the empire alone lay the future—in fact a great future—of this tiny island.

After the Napoleonic Wars one of the major arguments given by the exponents of the theory of separation was that the empire was bound to break up in a not too distant future, each colony going its own independent way. But more than half a century later the colonies were still there. The empire had not broken up. Separation remained a theory evoked by the fears of the faint-hearted anti-imperialists. Time had proved them wrong, and time is infallible. History was vindicating the imperialists, and history is truth. Thus armed with the might of history the imperialists grew bold. The empire shall not fall apart. The empire was a permanent thing. Therefore it must be expanded. This was enough to demolish the Little Englanders' case, though it was not till several years later that they were annihilated.

At the end of the 'sixties appeared a great industrial depression which brought much distress to the working classes. Unemployment was rife, and in 1869 and 1870 there grew up an agitation for state-aided emigration of the unemployed to the colonies. There was much sound sense in the proposal. The country would be spared the horrors of widespread unemployment with all its concomitant perils. The government would be dispensed from the obligation of thinking out and implementing unpopular anti-unemployment measures. At the same time it would provide a solution—albeit temporary—to the problem of over-population. The colonies would gain by receiving experienced working hands. The imperial mission of spreading progress and virtues of Western civilization would be fulfilled. Such economic crises were liable to repeat themselves in future, and such waves of emigration would not only relieve

misery at home and benefit the colonies but also help to persuade the working classes to share the general belief in imperialism.

There had been a time, not many years ago, when the unity of the empire was permanently endangered, or at least seriously weakened, by the slow and weak means of communication. Many an imperialist might have had doubts creeping into his faith by seeing how infrequent and tenuous were the contacts between the mother country and the empire or among the various parts of the empire itself. How could the unity of the empire be safeguarded or promoted in the face of these difficulties? But the validity of these arguments was being undermined by the miracles then being forged in the laboratories of science. The steam engine had arrived and made transport a thing of speed as well as pleasure. Electricity promised to augment these blessings. More was bound to follow, which the human eye could not see but the human intellect could discern. These developments would encourage the unity of the empire—in fact they were doing this already. So science was enthusiastically pressed into the service of imperialism. The unity of the empire had always been desirable; now it could also be proved to be practicable.

Imperial travel and imperial interest reacted upon each other. Englishmen travelled through the empire and were impressed with its dimensions and scale. They returned with their faith in it redoubled. Interest in the empire encouraged many people to leave their home and visit the colonies and other imperial possessions. Science helped here, too. With the improvement in communications the empire became a smaller world. Many influential theoreticians and practitioners of imperialism took to the road. Dilke and Froude travelled widely in the empire. Rosebery visited Australia in 1883, and later India and Egypt. Joseph Chamberlain, that great colonial secretary of the great colonial age, visited Egypt in 1889. Curzon, perhaps the greatest pro-consul of them all, travelled extensively in the far east. Smaller men made their smaller tours. And all were bewitched by what met their gaze. For the first time they saw with their own widely opening eyes what they possessed and what they saw fanned the imperial flame within them.

One of the charms of the leisurely Victorian age was the assiduity and faithful detail with which every traveller to the distant lands put his pen to paper and let the less fortunate stay-at-home share his adventures, observations and pleasures. Some of the travel books are of such high quality that the passage of time has not staled them and they can be read today with pleasure and profit. The standard of English prose was

then high, the well-to-do had more leisure, and the publishers too were more indulgent. The reading public, whose number was rapidly increasing, read and re-read and lent to their friends these travel books, specially those about the empire.

The writing and wide circulation of these books had two important effects. Probably more than anything else they formed and moulded public opinion in favour of imperialism. If the empire contained such exciting wonders as the books related, how nice to be in possession of it and how ridiculous to think of giving it up! It is most difficult to surrender a thing which gives pleasure, and so the common reader decided to hold fast to these bowers of bliss. Besides, they stimulated interest in exotic countries and the life beyond the seas. Descriptions of colourful Indian bazaars or of Maori warriors or of African tribal dances were no less absorbing than the portrayal of the Englishman's daily life amid inhospitable deserts and impassable mountain passes. A former country-cousin in Hampshire became the brave and industrious ruler of an Indian district almost as big as England herself. An acquaintance in some unknown regiment was transformed into an intrepid hero who had saved a thousand white women and children from certain massacre. The novelist arrived on the scene to paint the canvas in still brighter colours and the myth compounded.

The development of communications was, however, a world-wide phenomenon, not a British monopoly. As communications became efficient the possibility of some other Power annexing the British colonies began to chafe many minds. This served as an argument against their abandonment. A part of the force behind the theory of separation had been liberal: emancipation of colonies was desirable in order to enable them to become free. But if their abandonment meant the supplanting of English rule by the overlordship of another race or country, even the liberal-minded began to doubt the morality of their doctrine. Furthermore, no Englishman *compos mentis* was prepared to let his colonies go so that a rival power might enlarge its prerogative, drive English trade out of some markets and damage English economy. The mere contemplation of such dire consequences swung many minds to imperialism in spite of their liberalism in politics.

In politics there is often an oscillating movement whereby a doctrine produces a reaction and gives birth to an opposing force. In the first half of the nineteenth century the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial schools had given tongue to their convictions, often with vigour, occasionally with violence. But once this movement had reached the crest of its popularity, a reaction set in which facilitated a change

in favour of the opposite endeavour. It is about the beginning of the 'seventies that the pendulum commences to swing back and imperialism assumes a respectable look and begins to win favour.

The revival of military imperialism in Bismarck's Germany and Russia's gradual and purposeful advance in central Asia brought a new truth to small countries who had ambitions. The feeling grew that the day of the small nations was gone. In order to thrive and flourish as also to be heard without derision in the counsels of the world it was necessary to command organised military power on a large scale. If England, a small island on the margin of Europe, wanted to be one of the leading nations of the world she could do it only by aggregating with her colonial empire, by consolidating her imperial possessions and by pushing her imperial frontiers as far back as they would go. Thus, and thus alone, could she present herself as a world-wide empire with world-wide interests which could be protected by a strength primarily derived from her vast dominions scattered over four continents.

Imperialism, like Santa Claus, had something for everyone. It cast a spell on every class, group and profession. For the first time in their miserable existence the working classes woke up and looked beyond their shores. It is in the late 'sixties that we find the beginning of their keen interest in imperialism. In November-December 1869 *Beehive*, a working-man's paper, was completely converted to the imperial cause: in an editorial of 19 February 1870, it declared that though 'certain classes' had tried to get rid of the colonies, the newly enfranchised working-men would put a stop to that.[1]

To some it may seem astonishing that the working classes supported a doctrine which we generally associate with the monied, conservative-minded class. But not only was the logic of the working-class mind impeccable, its ideas were quite in keeping with the political thinking of the time. We must remember that Benthamite Liberalism, which had been anti-colonial though not anti-imperialist, had mainly been a middle-class creed. Brothers and uncles and cousins of the working-men had migrated to the colonies and had prospered. If bad trade returned or if unemployment reappeared they themselves might have to emigrate to make a living. Naturally they lent a sympathetic ear to what people like Froude and Dilke told them. The concept of a 'Greater Britain' appealed not only to their heart but even more to their head. When many among the working classes were first enfranchised by the Reform Act of 1867 another door to imperialism was thrown wide open. (In

1. Quoted in C. A. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (London, 2nd ed. 1960), p. 87 fn.

such inscrutable ways does democratic reform lead to strange results!) The reaction to Benthamite Liberalism thus produced two creeds: imperialism and collectivism (Socialism). Of the two, imperialism grew to manhood earlier because it had more general appeal, because it pointed to a shorter road to national prosperity and greatness, and because it was backed as much by the genius of Disraeli as by the force of human nature.

Several other incidents and developments in the empire also tended to help the new feeling to grow. The Indian 'Mutiny' of 1857 hardened the imperial resolve to keep India at any cost: had so much English blood been shed in quelling the rising so that a few years later the rebels should be rewarded with freedom! When Disraeli purchased the controlling shares of the Suez Canal Company another rivet went home in the chain around Egypt. Millions of pounds were not invested without a purpose. When diamonds were discovered at Kimberley in 1869 the place of South Africa in the empire was fixed for many years to come.

In the perspective of a hundred years these things may appear trifling in importance, but sometimes perspective distorts instead of clarifying. Their significance lies in the fact that they kept the imperial pot on the boil. Something was continually happening in the empire to keep its name, existence and value before the public gaze. As questions asked by school boys in the class-room help the revision, so these eruptions and occurrences reminded the English of their imperial responsibilities and privileges. Even when England suffered a temporary lapse and forgot the empire, the empire let a spark loose—here the dazzle of a diamond, there the flame of a firing gun—and England regained her presence of mind and remembered with gratitude, sometimes with awe, how much she possessed on this earth which was denied to others.

* * * *

For nearly fifty years, from the eighteen seventies to the end of the first world war, the tide of imperialism was at the flood. The makers of the empire went on painting the map of the world red till their dominions marched with the sun. Relays of administrators and soldiers went out into the dimly known world with undiminished zeal and returned covered with glory and sometimes with riches too. The message of 'civilization' was carried to the far away corners of Asia and Africa. The shining banner of progress was held aloft for all to see and emulate. There was a burst of spirit, resolution and buoyancy in this operation which is rare in the history of nations. The Englishman very

nearly came to believe in his infallibility. Like the Pope he was always right, and like the Pope his mission in life was blessed by Providence. God Himself was guiding his steps so that the higher values of life prevailed and mankind was lifted from the sombre shades of ignorance and superstition into the noon-tide of knowledge and reason.

If the victims of this benevolence protested, so much the worse for them. If in parts of the empire people did not welcome the rule of the white man, this was not allowed to weaken the resolve of the rulers. When a man is sick but refuses to take the medicine, is it not the duty, imposed by Providence as well as compassion, of the physician to ram the pill down his throat? How can you let the poor fellow kill himself through silly taboos and senseless inhibitions? Civilization was good for all, and this was beyond dispute. And only those who were civilized could say what civilization was. The European nations alone could determine the scope and scale of the civilized state and then try to bring those outside its pale into the Elysium. There was no question of listening to the prattle of those who refused to be civilized or to the boast of those who claimed that they too had a civilization of their own which was better than or at least equal to that brought by the *feringee*. Nothing could be better than what the foreign ruler recommended for the benefit of his subjects.

In this attitude it is not difficult to see shades of racial arrogance, intellectual intolerance and incredible ignorance of everything non-European. These were the elements making up the imperial feeling, but to say that and pass on will not lead us to the whole truth. To condemn is not to understand but to raise a barrier between the idea and yourself. The Englishman was, of course, convinced that he was right. He had carved out an empire unsurpassed by any other nation of the world. Victory had blessed his arms. Success had crowned his efforts. The empire was flourishing and all was well with the world. It was easy in these circumstances to enlist the help of God, of science, of human history, even of human intellect. How could so much be achieved by so few in so short a time unless the right was on their side? Material success and its vindication in philosophical and spiritual terms went hand in hand. In fact, at times the philosophical argument came after material superiority had produced tangible gains. It is so much easier to justify the accomplished fact.

However it might have been, one thing lies beyond doubt. The Englishman's sincerity is above suspicion. He genuinely believed that by expanding the frontiers of the empire he was doing good to mankind. He was carrying the lamp of progress to places where the last flicker of

hope had died out. He was transmitting higher values of life (as he understood them) to people who had lost their own ancient values or had never had them. His faith in his mission, in its righteousness and justice, was bright and strong. He was trying to improve the lot of man and ultimately 'to exalt, enthrone, establish and defend' the truth. If others refused to acknowledge this, he was not to be held responsible for their meagre understanding.

It has been said by many that this sincerity was a facade to hide the predatory and acquisitive features of imperialism. Of course, there was and there has to be an element, a strong element, of greed and grasp in imperialism; or we would not call it by that name. But imperialism is also a sort of a religion. People came to believe in it as if it were a confession of faith. It was the Englishman's creed for many a year, and he could not have achieved so much without this belief. There was an element of fanaticism in this belief, as there always is. Fanaticism, despite all that has been and can be said against it, pulls down empires and re-makes them, produces great men and sometimes breaks them, creates magnificent ideas and makes thousands die for them with all the joy of saints on their faces, sets afoot movements which change the history of the world, and gives birth to concepts and ideals which in the fulness of days come to form a part of human intellect.

But it is important to recall that fanaticism has two qualities which people often forget to recall to mind in their own fanaticism against fanaticism. One is that no great movement, particularly in war, nationalism and politics in general, has ever succeeded without its support. Who dare deny that Mazzini, Kamal Ataturk and Jinnah were fanatics in the cause of freedom? Were not the English, between 1940 and 1945, fanatically devoted to beating Hitler and winning the war? Was de Gaulle not a fanatic in the service and glory of what he considered to be the future of his *patrie?* The second quality of fanaticism, more relevant to our present purpose, is its sincerity. Unfortunately fanaticism has been so darkly painted by every one that the association with it of a virtue like sincerity sounds strange to our ears. This is because we are hypocrites. Sincerity is an essential part of fanaticism. Our belief in a thing must be strong, unshakable, genuine and doubtless, otherwise our loyatly is not complete and undivided. Without sincerity no great idea or movement has gone forth to conquer hearts or win empires.

In sum, if we want to understand imperialism, and not to blame or praise it, we must accept that it was a movement or concept in which the Englishman believed with absolute earnestness. He might have

been misguided, but that is irrelevant. Generations of English soldiers, statesmen, administrators and pro-consuls could not have established, developed and brought to full glory a movement in which they did not believe with every fibre of their mind and heart. Self-deception on this scale can never succeed. Hypocrisy has but a brief hour, and then the acting must stop and reality take the stage.

CHAPTER 2

# The Imperial Idea: I

On 16 November 1900 the Earl of Rosebery delivered his rectorial address at the University of Glasgow, and in the course of this imperial utterance he spoke eloquently of that many-splendoured thing, the British Empire. One lyrical passage merits recall:

'How marvellous it all is! Built not by saints and angels, but the work of men's hands, cemented with men's honest blood and with a world of tears, welded by the best brains of centuries past; not without the taint and reproof incidental to all human work, but constructed on the whole with pure and splendid purpose. Human, and yet not wholly human, for the most heedless and the most cynical must see the finger of the Divine. Growing as trees grow, while others slept; fed by the faults of others as well as the character of our fathers; reaching with the ripple of a resistless tide over tracts and islands and continents, until our little Britain woke up to find herself the foster-mother of nations and the source of united empires. Do we not hail in this less the energy and fortune of a race than the supreme direction of the Almighty? Shall we not, while we adore the blessing, acknowledge the responsibility? And while we see, far away in the rich horizons, growing generations fulfilling the promise, do we not own with resolution mingled with awe the honourable duty incumbent on ourselves? Shall we then falter or fail? The answer is not doubtful. We will rather pray that strength may be given us, adequate and abundant, to shrink from no sacrifice in the fulfilment of our mission; that we may be true to the high tradition of our forefathers; and that we may transmit this bequest to our children, aye, and please God, to their remote descendants,

enriched and undefiled, this blessed and splendid dominion.'[1]

As a foil to this, let us read the following words which George Bernard Shaw put in the mouth of Napoleon in *The Man of Destiny* (1896):

'No Englishman is too low to have scruples: no Englishman is high enough to be free from their tyranny. But every Englishman is born with a certain miraculous power that makes him master of the world. When he wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants. Like the aristocrat, he does what pleases him and grabs what he covets: like the shopkeeper, he pursues his purpose with the industry and steadfastness that come from strong religious conviction and deep sense of moral responsibility. He is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude. As the great champion of freedom and national independence, he conquers and annexes half the world, and calls it Colonization. When he wants a new market for his adulterated Manchester goods, he sends a missionary to teach the natives the Gospel of Peace. The natives kill the missionary: he flies to arms in defence of Christianity; fights for it; conquers for it; and takes the market as a reward from heaven. In defence of his island shores, he puts a chaplain on board his ship; nails a flag with a cross on it to his top-gallant mast; and sails to the ends of the earth, sinking, burning and destroying all who dispute the empire of the seas with him. He boasts that a slave is free the moment his foot touches British soil; and he sells the children of his poor at six years of age to work under the lash in his factories for sixteen hours a day. He makes two revolutions, and then declares war on our one in the name of law and order. There is nothing so bad or so good that you will not find Englishman doing it; but you will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he bullies you on manly principles; he supports his king on loyal principles and cuts off his king's head on republican principles. His watchword is always Duty, and he never forgets that the nation which lets its duty get on the opposite side to its interest is lost.'[2]

The degree of contrast in this juxtaposition is obvious, but the truth contained in the one does not exhaust the truth contained in the

1. *Questions of Empire* (1900), p. 37, quoted in George Bennett (ed.), *The Concept of Empire: Burke to Attlee 1774-1947* (London, 1953), pp. 326-327.
2. G. B. Shaw, *The Man of Destiny* (1929 ed.), pp. 200-201

other. Where Rosebery saw the finger of God quickening the British empire, Shaw could only behold the 'principle' of greed. Both were wrong, but Rosebery could at least think noble thoughts.

Whether the Englishman was inspired by divine frenzy or actuated by a love of earthly possessions is a question of motivation, and we will turn to it later. But what is significant is that every Englishman, including his womenfolk, thought imperially. The empire might or might not have been the result of a seizure of absent-mindedness, but assuredly the consciousness of empire was born in a long fit of presence of mind. It is conceivable that a man may conquer, annex, grab or buy in sheer forgetfulness, but it is beyond belief that he can glory in the possession of it without a wide-awake mind. When the mind began to quiver with this enjoyment, the command went forth 'Think imperially'.

* * * *

What was this imperial idea ? The three words, imperial, imperialism and imperialist, come from the Latin root *imperium* which means command or dominion. The origin of the word itself connects English imperialism with that of Rome, and it might be worth our while to see briefly if ancient Rome had any influence on the nineteenth-century English mind.

But first a word about Greek imperialism. The example of the Athenian Empire was made use of by both the imperialists and their detractors. It was perhaps an accident of history that in imperial Athens the democrats were in power and they upheld the imperial idea, while the oligarchs firmly set their faces against the concept of empire. The British Liberal Imperialists quoted this fact with glee to confound the Little Englanders. On reading about the Peloponesian War they mentally ranged themselves on the side of Athenian Liberal imperialism rather than on that of Spartan oligarchic reaction.

There were also other similarities between Greek and British imperial systems. Both, unlike the Roman empire, were based on a command of the sea. Both had an element of colonialism, again unlike the Roman empire. The Greek and the British colonized parts of the empire and encouraged in these settlements a feeling of affection and loyalty for the mother country. But one can draw from an example whatever one wants to draw. Those who were opposed to imperialism in England drew the attention of their countrymen to the fact (or rather to the interpretation of Thucydides) that after a while Athens had lost its virility, its morality and its spirit of intellectual curiosity under the corrupting influence of the empire, and that a like fate awaited Britain.

Both Greek and Roman influences on the English mind sprang from

university education which, till the end of the nineteenth century, had a dominating influence of classical studies. It is not an accident that a majority of colonial administrators and pro-consuls had read classics at Oxford or Cambridge. Once the young mind had been exposed to a thorough grounding in classical history, culture, philosophy and literature, it was bound, in that age of the empire, to compare Britain with Athens and Rome, to contrast their empires and to be disposed by the lessons it drew from this study.

Rome had a much deeper impact than Athens on the imperial thinking of England. Lord Lugard, one of the greatest pro-consuls of the empire and the father of the concept of indirect rule, acknowledged the debt. 'As Roman imperialism laid the foundations of modern civilization', he wrote, 'and led the wild barbarians of these islands along the path of progress, so in Africa today we are repaying the debt, and bringing to the dark places of the earth, the abode of barbarism and cruelty, the torch of culture and progress.'[1]

It was the Indian empire, however, which recalled, in an almost perfect degree, to the English mind all that was good and permanent in the Roman empire. The very idea of conquering and administering a far-flung territory of vast proportions without colonizing it was Roman in conception. The *Pax Britannica* now succeeded the *Pax Romana*, and not only the theory but also the practice of the imperial grandeur of Rome lived again. Nor were the makers of the empire loath to proclaim the truth of it. The spirit of Rome quickened the minds of such men as Cromer, who actually compared what he called ancient and modern imperialism, Curzon, who was happy 'to contemplate the pomp and majesty, the law and the living influence, of the Empire of Rome', Froude, who was powerfully moved by this ancient model, Rhodes, who thought he was striving to do in Africa what the Roman legions had done in ancient Gaul, and Kipling, whose genius touched its perfection when he wrote and sang of Rome. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the British actually believed that their imperialism was superior to that of Rome. Some of them likened the India of their day to England under Roman rule.[2] Some went further and compared India to Rome herself.[3] Those who took the Indian empire to be superior to the Roman argued that the Indian was Christian, reformist and

1. F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (2nd. ed. 1923), p. 618.
2. This line of thought can be seen in Grant, James Mill and Macaulay.
3. As an example see C.E. Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India* (London, 1838), specially p. 38.

democratic, and on each of these three points it surpassed the Roman.[1] It did good to the English heart to find that their imperial fabric was modelled on a glorious precedent whose achievements were a matter of historical fact, not of political controversy.

But the Englishman was selective even in his borrowing from Rome. Roman imperialism had worked on two broad principles: assimilation and discipline. The English took discipline and based their empire on it. The French took assimilation and made it the foundation of theirs. The peace-loving, orderly mind of the Englishman was supremely attuned to the virtues of discipline. Law and order came first: the power of law and the beauty of order. The army must be built up to keep the empire calm. The administrator should be highly trained and then given infinite powers. The rule of law should be made to prevail where previously there was anarchy and tyranny. Every ruler from the deputy commissioner to the noble pro-consul should make the care and welfare of his subjects dear to his heart and unheed the clamour of the ignorant and the wicked. The frontiers of civilization must continue to extend till there remain no uncivilized tribes or nations to imperil the future or perturb the peace of the *Pax Britannica.*

It may be noticed in passing that the British practice of indirect rule in Africa and of paramountcy over the native Indian states also owes its origin to the Roman system of client kingdoms.[2]

But why did the second Roman principle—that of assimilation—fail to appeal to the English? If the French could accept this principle and provide colonial representation in the metropolitan parliament, what stopped the English from following the same practice?

One reason was their geographical insularity. England is an island, cut off from all neighbours by the waters, and history has taught her people to be suspicious of all foreigners. The inborn conservative nature of the Englishman has added to this sentiment. Another reason was the feeling of racial superiority, particularly evident in this imperial age. One of the premises of the imperial idea was that the English race was one of the finest in the world and was in some mysterious way destined by Divine fiat to rule the world. None was their equal. Assimilation takes place where there is some consciousness or acknowledgement of

1. For this kind of approach see, for example, W. H. Russell, *My Diary in India in the Year 1858-1859* (London, 1860), Vol. I, p. 356; Lord Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (London, 1910), p. 49; and J. A. Cramb, *The Origins and Destiny o Imperial Britain* (London, 1915), p. 18.

2. In this discussion of Roman influence on British imperialism I have profitably drawn on the interesting and suggestive treatment of the subject in Richard Faber, *The Vision and the Need*, Faber and Faber, London, 1966.

equality. When the only relationship is one of superior and inferior absorption of any kind or degree is unthinkable.

This want of an attempt at assimilation underlines the contrast between British and French imperialisms. Even under the *ancien regime* French thinking was more egalitarian. The statutes for Madagascar, drafted in the seventeenth century under the supervision of Colbert, contained a provision that no distinction was to be made between the French and the natives. In French colonial history we rarely find that derogatory and contemptuous attitude towards the native which is often met in the writings and informal speeches of English administrators and other visitors to the British empire. French imperialism was more cultural than political. It aimed at making the natives French and teaching them to think and live and speak like Frenchmen. It did not emphasize that supreme importance of administration and law and order so precious to the English heart. The Colonial Congress of 1889, in one of its resolutions, had defined the aim of French imperialism in these words: 'All the efforts of colonization must tend to propagate amongst the natives our language, our methods of work, and gradually the spirit of our civilization.'

The French, too, were proud of themselves, of their country and of their civilization. But they were not race-minded. While the Englishman was justifying his swiftly expanding empire by the argument of the superiority of his race, the Frenchman was content to believe in the supremacy of his culture and his way of life. The goal in both cases was the same; but motives were different, and in consequence British imperialism had little in common with the French.

The French attitude to empire, which was less formal and rigid than the English, may be attributed to the fact that after the French Revolution there was no stable and powerful royalty in France. Monarchy tends to make the government rather stiff and cautious in its relations with the empire. English monarchs relished their imperial glory, their imperial rights and their imperial privileges. George III had wanted to retain the American colonies as part of his 'just inheritance'. Queen Victoria was very fond of 'her' Indian possessions and highly sensitive in all Indian affairs.

The values of the Victorian age were also responsible for the hardening of the imperial crust. The historical accident of the coincidence of imperialism with Victorianism left a deep, and on the whole unattractive, mark on imperialism. Some of the narrow-mindedness, the hypocrisy and the quaint puritanism of the age adulterated the high imperial ideals and introduced a double standard of judgment which

measured the white man and the native with different yardsticks. France was fortunate in not having a Victorian age in her history.

* * * *

It is popularly, and not unnaturally, understood that the march of imperialism was ordered by strong imperial-minded governments, while the weak, anti-imperialist governments sounded a retreat or at least ordered the advance to cease. This impression is wrong for two reasons. There is no evidence to show that logic played any part in the making of the empire. Everything that succeeds is not necessarily logical. In fact, logic has been conspicuously absent in all English institutions—constitutional monarchy, the House of Lords, the two-party system, the Commonwealth. Therefore to assume that a Tory government in office implied a growing empire is as fallacious as to suppose that a Liberal administration indicated a stop to imperial extension. Much was achieved during Disraeli's years of power, but then much was also added to the empire by Gladstone who hated every word, thought and act of the 'foppish Jew'. Nor is it correct to say that the empire grew when strong hands held the reins of power and shrank or stood still when palsied hands were at the helm.

It has been suggested that imperialism actually flourished when a weak government was in power. It was not the British might which began the advance; it were the explorers, the pioneers, the prospectors, the traders and the missionaries who extended the frontiers. The government generally confirmed the achievements of this motely group, or, on some rare occasions, intervened. Therefore the weaker the government at home the larger the annexations in its time. It was a sign of weakness not to be able to control the man on the spot. Was then the empire a child of weakness sired by chance and conceived in a fit of absent-mindedness?

It is difficult to pronounce a judgment on this argument about weakness. One example will show the complexities of the situation. Sind was conquered and annexed in 1843. This was done against the wishes of the responsible officials in India and England. Gladstone later revealed that the entire cabinet had been opposed to it. The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, criticised the whole operation. But a little later when the House of Commons debated the issue the Government's approval of the scheme was ratified by a very large majority. Of course, Ellenborough was later recalled as governor general of India, but the deed had been done and given the *imprimatur*. Now, much was involved in the annexation of the lower Indus valley. Sir Charles Napier, who was in fact a little mad and had dreams of high ambition and in his private journal often compared himself to Napoleon, was actually responsible for the conquest.

Ellenborough, the governor general, was a frustrated man who found much compensation in conniving with Napier at the scheme. The East India Company and the Home Government were kept ignorant and later presented with the annexation with a flourish. Was Peel's government a weak government? Was the cabinet so impotent as not to raise its voice in spite of its unanimous disapproval of the result? And why did the House of Commons give its sanction after a debate in which the evils of unauthorised expansion received more attention than the virtues of extending the outposts of civilization?

Such examples can be multiplied manifold. They show how tangled were the motives of everyone involved. But they throw into stark relief the power, the tenacity and the freedom of the man on the spot.

The real maker of the empire was the man on the spot. He had infinite confidence in his own talents, great pride in his mission of carrying light to dark places, considerable hope that the might of England would support him if he fell into difficulties, and almost unbridled authority to negotiate. Usually he was aggressive in word and deed and did not hide his thoughts behind vague or vacuous phrases. But sometimes he was magnificently immune to consistency. In 1836 Dost Muhammad, the Amir of Afghanistan, wrote to Auckland, the governor general of India, seeking his friendship and support in dealing with the Sikh danger on the frontiers of his country. In his reply the noble Lord made the incredible statement that he could not do anything about the Sikhs because it was the policy of the British Government not to interfere with the affairs of other independent states. But two years later when the governor general wanted to get rid of Dost Muhammad the policy of non-interference, so loftily preached to the Afghan ruler, was forgotten, and Auckland issued a declaration on 1 October 1838 which said: 'The welfare of our possessions in the East requires that we should have on our western frontier an ally who is interested in resisting aggression, and establishing tranquillity, in the place of chiefs ranging themselves in subservience to a hostile power and seeking to promote schemes of conquest and aggrandisement.' Within a few days of the issue of this declaration the news came that the Persians had raised the siege of Herat and that Afghanistan was now at peace. But the man on the spot had made up his mind and no fresh developments could dissuade him from going on with his plan. On 8 November he issued orders making it clear that 'he will continue to prosecute with vigour the measures which have been announced with a view to the substitution of a friendly for a hostile

power in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan'.[1] So began the first Afghan War which was to prove disastrous to Auckland's plans. Kabul was conquered and a puppet called Shah Shuja was put on the throne. Within a few months the people of Afghanistan rose in revolt, murdered Shah Shuja and turned out the British army of occupation which gradually lost its strength as it marched towards India until one man alone, Dr. Brydon, got through to Jalalabad to tell his gory tale. Dost Muhammad returned to the Afghan throne and continued his interrupted reign in the teeth of Auckland's opposition.

So the man on the spot went on struggling against fate, nature and his own government. Sometimes he succeeded, sometimes he failed. But nothing could dim his vision or weaken his arm. He knew that the empire was carved by people like him. He acknowledged his handicaps and vaguely took soundings of the open or concealed opposition which awaited him in Calcutta or London. He played for high stakes and it was a comforting thought that the penalties were trifling before the rewards. If he could conquer a province as large as his native land and make an offering of it to the nation, what did it matter if some ignorant speeches were made in a half-empty House of Commons or some cynical but helpless remarks were uttered by those who foolishly identified liberalism with Little Englandism! His duty was to advance the cause of England and this he did with courage and resolution, even when a part of England chose to withhold its felicitations and gratitude.

* * * *

In order to uphold and propagate the imperial idea a number of empire societies, associations and other institutions were established. Pre-eminent among them and the oldest, was the Royal Colonial Institute. Originally called the Colonial Society, it was founded on 26 June 1868 by a band of influential people with Lord Bury, the historian, at its head. In his speech at the inaugural meeting, which was held on 15 May 1869, Bury declared that one of the chief duties of the Society would be to combat the doctrines that colonies were an excrescence of the Empire, an encumbrance and a source of commercial and political loss. It was going to promote the ideal of a 'United Empire', and its members desired not only to consolidate the existing empire but to expand it. The first paper read before the Society was 'on the Relations of the Colonies to the Mother Country' by William Westgarth, in which he maintained that the retention of the colonies was

1. Extracts from the Governor General's orders are quoted in W. K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia* (London, 3rd. ed. 1967), p. 110.

beneficial to England and that the Empire was likely to last.[1]

The primary function of such bodies was to make the concept of empire popular among the people. They drew the attention of the common educated man to the fact that England was an imperial power and acquainted him with the privileges and benefits of this status. Two motives behind the formation and activities of these societies merit notice. It may be no more than speculation, but it appears as if there was a general indifference among the people to the empire and therefore it was felt that, if the nation was to be made imperial minded, this absence of interest, often a child of ignorance, must be thwarted. The imperial idea was a new belief which had to be spread beyond the original small circle of the faithful. It was in some ways a religion, and for the preaching of the gospel a church, or a series of churches, was required. These colonial societies were to be the tabernacles where the empire would be worshipped and the true word of imperialism uttered and sent out to convert the unbelievers and the doubtful. If this be true, it lends support to the observation that the empire came about in a fit of absent-mindedness. Few had noticed the inception and growth of this behemoth, and even now that it covered a good part of the globe associations and institutions had to be founded to attract supporters.

On the other hand, it is also possible that the idea behind their formation was simply the enjoyment of the imperial status. It was a deliberate attempt to sit back and take delight in the empire by talking, reading and writing about it. The real hard work of building up the empire was over: a few outposts remained untouched but surely the daring of the men on the spot abetted by some foolish act of the 'uncivilized' tribes would sooner rather than later round off such angles and corners. The important thing was that now, for the first time, the empire-maker could regain his breath after much toil and trouble, rest his limbs, and think and talk of his colonial days, of his adventures of far away and of his administrative experiments in evolving order out of a primitive, pre-imperial hurly-burly. When men of common experience and shared ideals met over a glass of wine or a cup of tea or simply a map which their own hands had painted red, the imperial lore lived again. There was much pleasure to be given and taken when word and thought and speech summoned that other world we call the past and dwelt on an object so marvellous and uplifting as an empire

1. For details see *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, Vol. I (1869). Incidentally, the date of its establishment is wrongly given as 1870 in Rita Hinden, *Empire and After: A Study of British Imperial Attitudes*, Essential Books, London, 1949, p. 75.

of ever-growing size and power. This, and along with it the message, spread wider and wider until the whole nation, or at least that part of it which mattered, began to think imperially.[1]

The present generation, even of Englishmen, may squirm at the mention of such doings, but let us keep before ourselves the *milieu* in which the imperial idea came to life and attained maturity. The temper of the age demanded that the empire must not remain an unseen, far-off thing which entered into the feelings and calculations of the politicians, the ex-administrators and some soldiers and traders alone. It must be made attractive, lively, exciting, something of which every Englishman should be justly proud, something which he would come to love as dearly as his personal possessions. It was not enough that England should have an empire; it was necessary that her people should know and feel that the empire was theirs. Imperialism could not become an idea unless its worth was prized by the nation and its spell was widely cast.[2] In promoting and spreading this idea the colonial societies were doing what the times demanded of them. It is meaningless to say today that this was a reactionary thing to do. We, who have seen the end of the empire, cannot think like those who believed that the end was far away, perhaps too far even to contemplate. To judge one age by the standards of another is to violate the logic of history. The Englishman of the second half of the nineteenth century had convinced himself that the empire was right, good and just and hence deemed it his duty to spread its gospel among his own people. To question the truth of his orthodoxy is permissible; to doubt the sincerity of his belief is unwarranted. He might have been wrong in embracing the virtues of the empire, but to say that he was insincere in his convictions is to claim the possession of something more than human wisdom.

An imperial institution of a slighty different nature, of which we should in passing take notice, was the Imperial Conference. Its origin is interesting and reflects the empirical approach of the English mind. Queen Victoria's golden jubilee came off in 1887, and with a view to associating the empire with the happy occasion the British government invited to London 121 delegates from all over the empire. This was

1. With similar ends in view, but on an elevated plane, Rhodes and Beit (both South African magnates) and Alfred Harmsworth endowed chairs of imperial history at London, Oxford and Cambridge universities.

2. That the message went home quite well is proved by an interesting example. Right till the end of the second World War the Windmill Theatre, one minute's walk from Piccadilly Circus, publicly announced its welcome to its 'colonial' visitors. By 'colonial' the theatre meant people from Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

the first Colonial Conference. The opening session was attended by all invitees; then the meeting was restricted to representatives of Britain and the dominions. This practice was maintained. The 1907 Colonial Conference—it met every four years—decided that future meetings should be called by the name of Imperial Conference, and the first Imperial Conference convened in 1911. But membership was still confined to the self-governing parts of the empire, and it was only in 1917 that an exception was made in the case of India, presumably on the score of her war effort. Each government had one vote and generally the topics of discussion were imperial defence, foreign affairs, economic policy and imperial constitution.

* * * *

The technique of imperial rule attracted much attention and thought when the British were faced with two problems which were new to them. As the empire grew in Asia, Africa, the Far East and the Pacific, a large number of peoples and races were encountered whom the Victorian imperialists chose to consider 'primitive'. The question was how to rule these strange people whose traditions and customs, social life and religious background, were so unfamiliar to the English as to be beyond reasonable understanding. When the ruler does not understand anything about the ruled and is himself a sealed book to the subjects the vision of both is distorted by the gulf of mutual incomprehension which separates them. This difficulty was compounded by the fact of the imperial power having slight administrative resources. When the cadre of imperial administrators is short and the things to be known and if possible mastered many, the ordinary methods of direct rule are unavailing.

Challenged by these difficulties to think anew the fertile imperial mind evolved a fresh technique for areas where people and their mores were outlandish and administrators were hard to come by. This was the principle of 'indirect rule'. The basic idea behind it was that the dependent people should, as far as possible, be ruled through their traditional or tribal institutions and leaders. This was not a novel thought and is directly traceable to Burke and his principle of trusteeship. But the imperialists evolved and applied it so skilfully as to elevate a vague idea to a distinct system of government. What had been a convenient device of administration under certain conditions was gradually but assiduously developed into a theory, which not only became the bedrock of British colonial policy in the twentieth century but also influenced French and Belgian colonial practice.

Two interesting aspects of this indirect rule open a window on the

working of the imperial idea. It was not a brain-child of the Colonial Office. In fact, London had virtually nothing to do with its development or practice. It was the ubiquitous man on the spot whose observations evolved the theory and whose decisions implemented it. The makers of indirect rule were administrators, not politicians. They were men dealing with the day-to-day problems and difficulties of ruling vast areas who were called upon to take snap decisions; they were not men sitting in their London offices and trying to think out neat solutions which would then be issued as policy edicts. The indirect rule was educed by many people working in various regions and facing similar problems. Sir Arthur Gordon contributed to it when he was serving in Fiji in the 'seventies. Sir George Goldie, the founder of the United Africa Company, gave its outline his firm impress and laid down the lines on which Nigeria should be ruled. Above all it was Lugard, a young army officer with a robust imagination, who went to tropical Africa and, finding no answer to his quandary in the hitherto perfected techniques of colonial administration, gave to the theory of colonial government a new dimension. The heart of this theory is well expressed in what he wrote in 1893 about Uganda: 'An arbitrary and despotic rule, which takes no account of native customs, traditions and prejudices, is not suited to the successful development of infant civilization, nor, in my view, is it in accordance with the spirit of British colonial rule. The king has been proved incompetent and useless, but the Resident should rule through and by the chiefs.'

Mainly on account of the way in which Lugard expounded the theory and the success with which it was applied to several parts of the empire, it assumed the rigidity and power of a doctrine. In fact, it has been called a theology. The Bible of this theology, the text-book of this doctrine, was Lugard's *Dual Mandate*. We may pursue this analogy from religion and say that the official papers of Sir Donald Cameron, governor of Tanganyika and later of Nigeria, were a commentary on the Word of Lugard.

What strikes one in the making of this theory is the fact that a doctrine was developed to justify a procedure. In the performance of their duties the colonial administrators met certain problems involved in ruling a people of a different civilization with an inadequate staff. Reflection, administrative training, imagination and a *penchant* for experimentation combined to produce a new idea of ruling through the native chiefs. The Chief was to be a glorified district officer, but without his initiative and without the heart-uplifting authority of the man on the spot. This may have been, it perhaps was, a very ingenious,

useful and successful method of meeting a situation. But was it necessary to raise it to the level of a credo? At least two generations read, or were made to read, in Lugard's words much more than he had put into them. Did not the lifting of a technique, a device, a procedure, and the making of it a doctrine, a system, a creed, go against the grain of British empirical tradition?

* * * *

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1933 ed.) defines imperialism as 'the principle or spirit of Empire; advocacy of what are held to be imperial interests'. What lay behind this principle? What moved this spirit?

It is easy to impute motives; it is difficult to be precise and dogmatic about them. In the case of imperialism the quest for motives is rendered even more difficult by their multiplicity and wide range. Nobody sat down and drafted the articles of the imperial faith which can serve as an unerring guide to the working of one individual mind. The idea grew imperceptibly but vigorously over several decades. Much went into it. Many minds contributed to its growth. Many motives, tangled and half-alive, lay behind it. It is as difficult as it is dangerous to enter another mind and see it at work. It is much more hazardous to study the working of many minds, perpetually acting and reacting on one another and to extraneous factors. But this hazard has to be run if we are to grasp the temper and spirit of the imperial idea.

Perhaps one way to get round the problem is to look at the men who were occupied with imperialism. Six groups or classes at once come into sight. First, there were the makers of money: businessmen, traders, producers and industrialists. Fast-growing industries demanded colonial raw materials. Big investors and producers wanted safe markets. Shipping magnates, too, wanted markets and, in addition, imperial staging posts to keep the way clear, safe and, preferably, reserved to them. Makers of uniforms and armaments prayed for imperial expansion, for it lengthened their purse. Producers of telegraph and railway material saw profitable business in the speed at which the map of the world was turning red. Bankers were anxious to open new overseas branches and invest their deposits under near monopoly conditions.

Then come the military and naval officers, with their colourful uniforms and prospects of limitless adventure in pushing back the barbarian outskirts. The officers had a vested interest in fighting in the cause of the empire. It kept them employed and brought them renown. Theoretically the soldier was a professional fighter who did not belong to any party. In practice he gave his allegiance to the

party which fostered expansion. It was ordinary common sense to support, however indirectly, the men who provided him with new jobs, rapid promotion and a whole new series of decorations to be won. The young officer was warmed by the thought that the empire was large enough to call upon his services this day or the next, and, given some talent and a bit of luck, much could be achieved which was inconceivable at home or on the continent. Many senior commanders, growing tired and grey by long years of parade-ground inspection, frustrated by slow promotion, troubled by the approaching obscurity of retirement, saw their chance on some far-flung frontier, grasped it with both hands, and, with much courage not unmixed with much selfishness, conquered a province before their civilian superiors a few hundred miles away could intervene or the Home government a few thousand miles across the seas could protest, reprimand or recall. Look at Napier, the conqueror of Sind, who compared himself with Napoleon in all seriousness and cursed himself for not having achieved high ambition. Promotion came to him slowly and grudgingly and he ate his heart out in lonely bitterness when, lo !, one morning opportunity knocked at his consciousness and he sprang to action. Within weeks he had annexed a large desert to the empire. He himself called it a piece of rascality and so have others to this day, but what did it matter when put by the side of the profound comfort it brought to his heart and much fame to boot?

Next we see a long and distinguished line of colonial officers, diplomatists, administrators and pro-consuls. From Milner, Curzon and Cromer to the district officer and the collector there runs a unity of thought like the thread of gold in an oriental robe. These were the people whose lives were spent in creating, expanding, consolidating and running the empire. They lived by it, delighted in it, defended it, improved it and in many a case died for it. There was surely something noble in leaving the native shore, the good cheer of the family hearth and the friends of one's youth, and make a dusty home many thousands of leagues away; in carrying the message of British civilization to peoples of different races; in striving to improve the life and thought of total strangers; in administering an area as large as England and leaving the impress of one's personality on it; in riding for days across green fields, to meet the *ryot*, to judge, adjudicate, cajole, reprimand, punish, and to hunt the tiger or spear the boar; in digging canals or building bridges, opening a hospital or sanctioning a school. These *feringees* were wonderful, strange creatures. They worked round the clock and loved their simple peasants with utter sincerity. But they must be a little touched in the head for coming so far in search

of flies, dust and heat. For men like these the empire was a necessity, a call of duty, a summons to greatness. For some unfortunately it became a drug and for this delinquency they paid with their reputation.

Behind the pro-consuls and other famous names lie thousands of ordinary English, Irish and Scottish families, obscure, undistinguished and undistinguishable, the run of the mill, simple folk—but they offered their mite of aid and comfort to the empire by providing recruits for colonial service and regiments of the line. When a son was fighting the Maori in New Zealand, a cousin facing the bullet of a Pathan on the north-west frontier, and an uncle running a district in Bengal, well! the ordinary family was ordinary no more. It took pride in its close, literally blood, relationship with the empire. With every man who left his home to serve or rule the empire (the difference was unknown even to them), imperialism won the grateful allegiance of a whole family. Even today a fading photograph of a barrack in some God-forsaken place, an old book first read during a tour in the bracing Punjab winter, a tattered uniform worn many many years ago in a desert where scorching winds blew free and wide, a crumpled yellowing letter written to the dear mother from a dak bungalow perched high on the steep rock of hill covered with pines and furs, a short paragraph in the morning paper which one in a million will bother to look at twice—any of these can summon the past as if the past had just departed. Then memory holds the door and the happy, golden days of the empire return and bring some pain, some pleasure, and much reflection, the heart beats a little faster, the pulse begins to pound, there is a glint in the old, watery eyes, and a prayer goes up from the soul in thankfulness for many a glad day spent in glory.

The empire had a special attraction for the younger sons of influential but not-so-rich families for whom it provided an honourable career. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the roll of the servants of the East India Company is replete with young writers and residents who were nominated by the directors and their friends. Once the principle of competitive entry was established for India the civil service was closed to all but the best of these younger sons, but colonial openings continued to be available to them in business and commerce.

Finally, there were the missionaries who came trooping in with the message of Christ on their lips and an un-Christian intolerance of all religions but their own in their hearts. The eighteenth century had been an age of doubt and questioning. In the nineteenth the reaction set in which marked Europe with a religious revival of almost fanatical proportions. Messengers of the Kingdom of Heaven went forth

to spread the Holy Writ. The Church blessed the arms of England and looked at each victory as one more proof that Providence was on their side. Christianity went hand in hand with commerce at one place, with humanitarianism at another, with racial arrogance at still another. Lay teachers of the Church not infrequently promoted vast earthly empires and preferred to see in it the hand of God.

CHAPTER 3

# The Imperial Idea : II

The men behind imperialism help us to understand the phenomenon of imperialism itself. Once we know *how* they acted we may see *why* they did so. Behind every action lies a thought (or so we hope) and their actions may hold a clue to their thoughts.

The hope of economic gain was uppermost in the minds of many. A large part of the empire had come through trading ventures and the necessity for making the trade safe. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when imperialism was rampant, the impulse for expansion came from some added considerations. Surplus manufacturers cried for fresh markets and surplus capital for new areas of investment. Growing industry demanded more and more tropical and sub-tropical products. Then came a series of depressions from the 'sixties onwards and shook the old complacent belief in the permanence of industrial dominance. Prosperity was seen to be a fickle goddess whose favours could not be taken for granted. She must be propitiated, and thus imperialism became an offering at the altar of mammon. Burke had defined the Old Colonial system as 'purely commercial', and in a later age Joseph Chamberlain recalled Burke by using the phrase 'The Empire is Commerce'.

Two other factors heightened the urgency of the economic motive. One was the fast increase in population which necessitated some migration to the colonies. The other was the expanding middle class with families larger than before, and already at the beginning of the century Bentham had pointed out that these families could find employment only in an expanding empire.

Thus, whatever way you looked at the size, character and future of British economy everything pointed to one direction: imperialism. This was by no means unique in the Europe of that time. But England's size and island status exposed her to the vagaries of the laws of economics more than other European countries. And then she had already made a good start with the empire, and it called for less initiative and effort to keep on consolidating it and, if necessary, adding bits and pieces to it. This task was much facilitated by the rapid development of the means of communication.

The feeling of racial superiority, however distasteful it may be to the twentieth century man, was a vital ingredient of imperialism. A few quotations will indicate the strength of this sentiment.

Sir Charles Dilke: 'Nature seems to intend the English for a race of officers, to direct and guide the cheap labour of the Eastern Peoples.' And again: 'Love of race, among the English, rests upon a firmer basis than love of mankind or love of Britain, for it reposes upon a subsoil of things known; the ascertained virtues of the English people.' (*Greater Britain*). James Froude: 'We have conquered our present position because the English are a race of unusual vigour both of body and mind. . .' (*England and the Colonies*). Ruskin: 'There is a destiny now possible to us, the highest ever set before a nation to be accepted or refused. We are still undegenerate in race; a race mingled of the best northern blood.' (*Inaugural Lecture* at Oxford, 1870). Rhodes: 'We happen to be the best people in the world, with the highest ideals of decency and justice and liberty and peace; and the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for humanity.' Rosebery: 'The greatest secular agency for good that the world has seen.' (*On British Empire*, 1884). Joseph Chamberlain: 'I believe in this race, the greatest governing race the world has ever seen; in this Anglo-Saxon race, so proud, tenacious, self-confident and determined, this race which neither climate nor change can degenerate, which will infallibly be the predominant force of future history and universal civilization.' (*Speech at the Imperial Institution*, 1895). And again: 'No doubt, in the first instance, when these conquests have been made, there has been bloodshed, there has been loss of life among the native populations, loss of still more precious lives among those who have been sent out to bring these countries into some kind of discipline and order, but it must be remembered that this is the condition of the mission we have to fulfil.' (*Speech at the Royal Colonial Institute Dinner*, 1897).

Pope-Hennessy arrived in Hong Kong in the 1860s as governor and at once expressed disapproval of the way the English treated the natives

an d, in his dispatches to the home government, castigated the theory of the racial superiority of the white man. Such heresy revolted the mind of Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary, who commented in writing: 'It is impossible not to distrust the judgment of a man who writes in this strain.'[1]

This racial arrogance was not limited to the functionaries of imperialism. It ran in the English blood and laughed all political differences to scorn. In 1865, when a Select Parliamentary Committee recommended British withdrawal from the West African settlements on ground of their unhealthy climate, Lord Stanley, an anti-imperialist, recorded this comment: 'I do not believe there is a year or even a month that passes in which the service on that coast does not put an end to some life among our officers which, measured by any rational standard of comparison, is worth more than the merely animal existence of a whole African tribe.'[2] It seems that not only imperial advance but imperial retreat too was governed by the principle of racial superiority.[3]

How did the Englishman justify to explain this faith in the superiority of his race? Religion and science were the two things which were popular in the nineteenth-century Britain, and both were pressed into service. First, religion was made the source of this belief. Christian ethics, Christian morality, Christian thought and deed, Christianity in all its aspects was the finest of all religions, God was on the side of the English race, and to expound its superiority was but to confirm this dispensation. Later, when religion lost its general appeal or when Divine judgment was considered insufficient, science came to the rescue. The law of natural selection was received as a tenet. Only the fittest survived and the racial purity of the Anglo-Saxons was a conclusive proof of the truth of this law. Britain must rule the waves, the sands and the plains because the English race was the elect of all according to scientific principles. To contest the imperial right of the English was to deny an axiom of science, just as a little earlier to do so would have been to deny the existence of God. Thus the imperial message was inscribed some time on the banner of Christ and some time on that of Darwin.

1. Quoted in Richard Faber, *The Vision and the Need*, p. 49.

2. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 44.

3. But the profession of such ideas by so many people did not stop some others from exerting themselves in such humanitarian causes as the abolition of slavery. In spite of the belief of some that an Englishman's life, even his health, was more precious than that of any number of natives, there were others to whom not only the life but even the liberty of an African slave was a matter of great concern. Every friend of England will hope that she is remembered through the latter rather than through the former.

This self-congratulatory mood in which the English extolled themselves to the skies had its source in the remarkably long run of luck which had come their way. When the young Victoria, destined to be the only empress in the scroll of English royalty, came to the throne England was already the workshop of the world. No industrial competitor was in sight. The French had been roundly beaten. The sovereignty of the British navy had been tested and re-affirmed. The empire was the greatest in the world and was still expanding. The nations of the Continent were lazy and immoral and presented no threat to English supremacy. It was not difficult for men to believe that they were doing good to the world by spreading improvement, progress and the true creed. They looked at themselves as the blessed messengers of enlightenment. All was well with the world, and a swagger came to their gait and a toss to their head.

It is always difficult to defend racial pride, for there is nothing in it to defend. It is the weakest link in the imperial pattern and for most part inexcusable. It creates hatred by reaction, and there is no country, once under British rule, where even the most genial memory of the imperial masters is not clouded by a thought of their racial arrogance. The wound of the sword heals in time, the injury of the tongue has no cure. The harsh word, the contemptuous glance, the mocking gesture, the wounding remark, the bitter taunt, the ironic phrase—these will rankle in the heart when the tales of English wars of conquest have faded into twilight legends.

But justice demands that one comment be recorded here. The English sinned in arrogating to themselves the choicest place among all races. But they sinned in excellent company. No imperial race in the history of mankind has succeeded in redeeming itself from this conceit. The Aryans, perhaps the world's first imperialists, swept through the ancient East drunk with pride, destroyed every settlement, religion and race that did not, in their own opinion, measure up to their standards. The Greeks, lovers of wisdom and seekers of truth, called every other people save their own by the name of barbarian. The Arabs, whose imperial sway united three continents, were a proud race and the non-Arab stood low in their scale of judgment, as he does to this day. It appears as if an assumption of infallibility, a sentiment of solidarity, even haughtiness, is a prerequisite of any great collective effort. Nothing can be achieved until all the hearts in the community beat in unison and in pride. The arrogance of race was at its root really a conviction that the community was on the way to achieving something great.

This once again reminds us of the vastly different English and

French attitudes to racial pride. The French, unlike the English, do not believe in racial exclusiveness. They did not look at the native with that stiff aloofness generously laced with contempt which characterized the English colonial administrators. They mixed socially and were neither cool nor curt nor uncommunicative. They sported native mistresses and not infrequently married native women. Dupleix had an Indian wife, Begum Johanna, who was not bidden to hide herself behind the screens of a *harem* as if her husband had committed a *faux pas*. Champlain and Brazza lived and dressed like a native for many years. Lagarde did not think himself too superior to accept an Abyssinian dukedom, nor Laborde to become a Malagasy prince. The French have been genuinely and sympathetically interested in studying the native, and their imperial literature abounds in competent and open-minded accounts of the native way of life and thought. They did not assume that everything native was inferior, primitive and in need of improvement. They were prepared as much to be influenced by the native as to influence him.

But then the French suffered from another kind of superiority complex. They paid the same unquestioned compliment to their culture which the English paid to their race. The French man was, and still is, incorrigibly proud of his culture and language, and consequently his imperialism had had a cultural facet which British imperial theory or practice never cultivated. In spite of Macaulay's paean to English letters and his dream of producing black Englishmen in India, the English never made a serious attempt to pass on their culture to the Indians. English was made the language of schools and offices: but for the convenience of the English individual, not for the improvement of the Indian mind. Some Indian leaders read English authors, but this was severely limited to the writings which they could quote to the English in defence of their claim to independence. English culture never became a part, even a small part, of the Indian's approach to life or his intellectual and mental equipment. But of this more later.

* * * *

After race the most pervasive influence on imperialism was that of Christianity. In fact the two often overlap when superiority is claimed as an Englishman and as a Christian. To estimate the play of Christianity on imperial thinking we must recognise the role of religion in the nineteenth century England.

The common morality of the Victorian age was rooted in religion. Such different public men as Gladstone and Shaftesbury and Bright had one common factor in strong religious background. The English

themselves were perhaps not fully aware of the strength of this religious element in their culture, but today a close look at the life of that age leaves no room for doubt that England was intensely religious minded. Guizot's perceptive mind had seen this in as early as the 'forties. Elie Halevy's *History of the English People of the Nineteenth Century* makes – and wisely—the whole story turn on the central theme of religion. The spiritual energy of the English race, partially suppressed by the eighteenth-century emphasis on reason, burst forth with the turn of the century and the accumulated favour of nearly a hundred years broke all barriers and overflowed into every department of life –private and public, social and political, literary and intellectual. The resulting harvest was profuse in variety, intense in feeling, wide in sweep, though naturally uneven in quality.

The England of the nineteenth century was in a significant way the child of the seventeenth century: almost as if the eighteenth had not intervened. The spirit of the Puritans and the Levellers moved in the Radicals and the Chartists. The daily use and impact of religion now generated as many social and political forces as had been produced in the seventeenth century. Religion pervaded every sort and kind of man: those who had strong religious convictions, like Newman and Gladstone; those who had a philosophic turn of mind, like John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer; those who bowed their knee to the new gospel of socialism, like Robert Owen; those who believed in co-operation and collectivism, like Holyoake; even those who scanned the horizon of religion for the rise of secularism, like Congreve the Positivist; and the poets and the singers, like Tennyson and Kipling. The nineteenth century was pre-eminently a century of religion, as the seventeenth had been, but England was fortunate in that while the old fervour had degenerated into strife and discord and the narrowing of intellectual horizons the new blossomed into peace and co-operation and hope. That imperialism reaped the fruits of this uniformity of faith was no accident of history.

Two evangelical revivals had come in quick succession and between them had appeared the Oxford Movement. Together they made England a deeply religious society for the like of which we have to retrace our steps as far back as the Reformation. The moral and intellectual superiority of Christian ethics and Christian doctrine was unassailable. It reflects the immense strength of this conviction that it was shared even by those who were not Christian. Defending the Brahmo Samaj attempt to reform Hinduism against the criticism of orthodox Churchmen, Charles Kingsley himself an English Board

Churchman, wrote: 'I trust that no bigotry here will interfere with men who, if they are not at the point to which St. Paul and St. John attained, are trying honestly to reach that to which Abraham, David, and the Jewish prophets rose: a respectable height I should have thought.'[1]

In the light of such strongly-held views on the superiority of Christianity it was but perfectly natural for it to become a part of the imperial intellectual equipment. The diffusion of the message of a superior civilization was the heart of imperialism. Christianity was the source and life of this civilization. So the propagation of the Christian message had to go hand in hand with the extension of the Empire. It was the duty of the English race to convey the benefits of its civilization to those who did not possess them. Equally it was its duty to spread the word of Christ among those who were ignorant of it and lived in the darkness of infidelity. Thus it came to pass that a religion which wanted to be judged by its virtues of humility and love was presented to countless millions draped in robes of arrogance, power and pride.

It was openly preached by many that Christianity demanded an empire and that the cause of the one was the cause of the other. Earl Grey, a War and Colonial Secretary who played an important part in the implementation of the Durham Report and in the defence of the grant of responsible government to the colonies, wrote: 'I conceive that, by the acquisition of its Colonial dominions, the Nation has acquired a responsibility of the highest kind, which it is not at liberty to throw off. The authority of the British Crown is at this moment the most powerful instrument, under Providence, of maintaining peace and order in many extensive regions of the earth, and thereby assists in diffusing amongst millions of the human race, the blessings of Christianity and civilization.'[2] Four years later David Livingston returned to Britain after exploring the Zambesi and, in his lectures at the two oldest English seats of learning, spoke of the duty of all Englishmen to spread among the Africans 'these two pioneers of civilization—Christianity and commerce'. In his Cambridge address he declared: 'I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity. Do you carry out the work which I have begun.'[3] Christianity and commerce seem to have made a pleasant and profitable recipe for the imperialists. Christianity was

1. *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life*, Vol. II, p. 318, quoted in D. W. Brogan, *The English People: Impressions and Observations* (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1943), p. 173 fn.

2. Earl Grey, *The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration*, London, 1853.

3. For details about these addresses see, G. W. Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingston*, London, 1880.

now called upon to help the advance of English mercantile interests, of all places in China. Hobson quotes from a report written by the British consul at Canton: 'To the sceptical Chinese the interest manifested by a missionary in business affairs would go far towards dispelling the suspicions which now attach to the presence in their midst of man whose motives they are unable to appreciate, and therefore condemn as unholy.... Immense service might be rendered to our commercial interests if only the members of the various missions in China would co-operate with our Consuls in the exploitation of the country, and the introduction of commercial as well as of purely theological ideas to the Chinese intelligence.'[1]

Christians had the right—it is permissible here of all the places to call it a Divine right—to rule the world not only because their religion was the only true one but also because their moral standards were the highest. Listen to Sir Francis Younghusband, the lone invader of Tibet and author of several books on India: 'No European can mix with non-Christian races without feeling his moral superiority over them. He feels, from the first contact with them, that whatever may be their relative positions from an intellectual point of view, he is stronger morally than they are. And facts show that this feeling is a true one. It is not because we are any cleverer than the natives of India, because we have more brains or bigger heads than they have, that we rule India, but because we are stronger morally than they are. Our superiority over them is not due to mere sharpness of intellect, but to that higher moral nature to which we have attained in the development of the human race.'[2]

Imperialism had been rich in all material appurtenances. What it needed was a spiritual benediction, and Christianity blissfully filled the want. If there was any Englishman who would have looked askance at empire-building his conscience was salved when his religion consecrated his ambition. Imperialism was sanctified and at one happy stroke the doubts and questionings of the spirit were silenced. The way lay

1. Quoted in J. A. H. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (George Allen and Unwin, London, first pub. 1902, 4th imp. 1948), p. 202. It is strange that these words should come from the pen of a diplomat of a race which had taken a part of China on the most un-Christian ground conceivable. In 1841 Hong Kong was taken from the Chinese because the Chinese Imperial Commissioner had tried to suppress the importation of opium, holding it to be injurious to Chinese health. Since British merchants were not in the habit of observing such regulations, their stock of the drug was seized and destroyed and a trade boycott of the British formally declared. British naval power responded effectively and the British Indian navy took Hong Kong and all British demands were granted. The Chinese continued to eat opium so forcefully imported into their country by the British imperial might.

2. F. Younghusband, *The Heart of a Continent*, London, 1896.

clear and inviting to see the hand of God in every imperial triumph.

The habit of blithely assuming Divine sanction for every increase in the empire became endemic. Sir John Shore asked himself the rhetorical, and in his age a completely unnecessary, question, 'Has not Providence imposed upon you the care of millions?'[1] Sir John Kaye saw in India's acquisition 'so many finger-prints of the "hand of God in history", which he who would read the annals of the Company aright, should dwell upon with reverence and humility'.[2] Such a level-headed man as W. T. Stead ascribed the 1876 anti-Turk agitation in England 'to the direct intervention of God'.[3] Generally the English nation believed in the 'absolute purity' of this agitation as 'a confession of faith, a kind of dogma of immaculate conception and virgin birth'.[4]

And if we accept the identification of the deeds of the missionaries with Divine will, there is no doubt that the hand of God annexed many an area for the English. As early as in 1823 the London Missionary Society sent its first evangelist, the Reverend John Williams, to Rarotonga, the largest of the Cook Islands. Soon more missionaries arrived and directed destruction of all graven images of ancient belief until all Polynesian gods were vanquished. Until 1888, when the Southern islands became a British protectorate, missionaries virtually governed the entire area; perhaps the only example of an English Christian theocracy intervening between subjection and British rule. In 1894 Uganda became a protectorate partly under the pressure of the Church Missionary Society.

The impact of Christianity on imperialism illustrates the truth of the dictum that power corrupts. Once Christianity had entered the field of politics, particularly imperial politics, it shed its tolerance even for its own flock, and at times its imperial messengers fought amongst themselves a virtual civil war in pursuit of the heavenly kingdom. In Buganda Protestant and Catholic missionaries used violence on each other to spread their own version of the gospel. A similar, but more complicated, struggle ensued in New Zealand, where the missionaries claimed the right to maintain the country as a home for the Maori where they would be converted to Christianity. The New Zealand

1. Sir John Shore (Lord Teignmouth) was the famous revenue expert and (barring Lawrence) the last Governor General of India to be drawn from the covenanted service.
2. John William Kaye, *The Administration of the East India Company* (London, 1853), p. 660.
3. See R. T. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876* (Thomas Nelson, London, 1963). Stead was then editor of Darlington *Northern Echo*.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Land Company, on the other hand, insisted on making New Zealand a white man's country by bringing in English settlers. The quarrel between the exponents of Christianity and those of colonialism did not endear either to the Maori. The image of the English was still more tarnished when the Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Wesleyans carried on an unedifying fight for the soul of the poor Maori. Later when most of the Maori had been converted they gave a delightful lesson in Christian observance to their British rulers. To put an end to the oft-recurring strife between the settlers and the Maori, Captain George Grey, the newly-appointed governor of New Zealand, attacked and carried the major Maori fortress in January 1845. The Maori, brave fighters and admirers of bravery in others, complained that Grey had won because he had chosen to attack on a Sunday when most of their own warriors, with the zeal of the new converts, were at church. Governor Grey's reply is not recorded.

Along with racial pride, Christian aggressiveness was the most unattractive aspect of imperialism. But the impact of Christianity produced one wholesome result: it gave rise to humanitarianism. In fact, humanitarianism was a product of two forces: rationalism and evangelicalism. The enlightenment of the eighteenth century had made its own contribution to the imperial attitude. There was a widening of interest and people began to look outwards. The study of mankind stimulated the rise of utilitarianism and the spread of the humanitarian feeling. Evangelicalism pointed in the same direction. Already in the 1790s it had inspired the Protestant foreign mission movement. This was a new consciousness, a new assertion, of the moral obligations arising from dealing with what the English took to be backward peoples.

Humanitarianism was not an inconsiderable element in imperialism. To us today it may look unbelievably odd that the same English nation which considered the black African something less than a human being and put the death of one English officer higher in importance than the disappearance of a whole African tribe also made vigorous, long and sincere efforts to eradicate slavery from Africa. The answer to the conundrum is given by the nineteenth century humanitarian feeling. There was no doubt that the English race was the finest of them all. It was also an incontrovertible fact that Christian civilization was superior to any other. But this superiority also carried a responsibility with it: the responsibility of bringing relief to the oppressed and of eradicating evil practices. This sentiment alone explains the remarkable phenomenon of the anti-slavery campaign—even more remarkable when it is recalled

that this trade had made Liverpool and Bristol rich in the eighteenth century. It also accounts for the strange and, to the Indian mind, puzzling sight of an English district officer working himself to death in a fight against famine and at the same time doggedly persisting in his opinion that Indians were not fit for self-government. There was no contradiction in this, but the subject races who knew little of the working of the English mind saw no logic in it and wondered if the English were not a little mad.

Humanitarianism is not far removed from a feeling of regard for others as a principle of action. So altruism, of a rather aggressive hue, soon took possession of some people in England. It flowered in Kipling who in 1899 gave a new phrase to the language as well as to the already picturesque Imperial vocabulary. His lines on the 'White Man's Burden' ran:

> Take up the White Man's Burden—
> Send for the best ye breed
> Go bind your sons to exile
> To serve your captives' need ;
> To wait in heavy harness,
> On fluttered folk and wild—
> Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
> Half-devil and half-child.

The imperial mission was not a light responsibility. It enjoined on every member of the imperial race the duty to improve the backward peoples. This called for greater sacrifice, for much discomfort and suffering, for a permanent exile from one's own familiar shores, for the break-up of the families, for very hard work in inhospitable conditions, for the doing of good which often went unrecognized and unapplauded, for being loyal to one's conscience and one's sense of duty and for staying loyal even when things looked dark and hope and happiness looked distant dreams. There was much pride and snobbery in this, but there was also high idealism and the capacity to suffer in silence in the pursuit of one's ideals. To the Englishman who left home when young and bright to work in India for a whole lifetime, who sometimes did not marry at all lest family entanglements divided his time and loyalty, who, if married, always parted with his children and sent them away to be brought up in English homes and in English schools, who lived in heat and dirt and discomfort year after year and sometimes died in a far-flung district, who visited England at long and irregular intervals and then found himself a stranger amid his own people, who measured his own worth by the bridges he made, the canals he dug, the hospitals he

constructed, the roads he laid and the famines he avoided, who gradually came to love the people of his district and his province, a love which was not like the one he would have given to his own countrymen were he living among them, but a love which was something less and also something more than this, a love which shines like hope on every page of his memories—to such an Englishman the question 'What business have you to be in India anyway?' was not only irrelevant but incomprehensible. He was there because he had to be there. It was his duty, his destiny, his whole life. Perhaps it was a burden—though one can see how Kipling as an artist exaggerated the heaviness of the load to heighten the effect—but a burden to be carried without letting the back bend or the lips purse up. It was altruism, but an altruism which gave much pleasure to the spirit. It was philanthropy, but a philanthropy where giving was also receiving. It was humanitarianism, but a humanitarianism where the love for others vanquished the love for oneself.

If the picture drawn here is too idealized for some tastes, let it be recorded that the writer of these pages believes in the general moral principle that everyone should be judged by his best, not by his worst. There are several murky spots in the annals of British rule in India which it is not difficult to point out and which are easy to condemn. Not every Englishman in the service of India was a paragon of virtues—how many of us are? Nor was every official decision and policy a model of good governance. There were civil servants who were dishonest or stupid or both. Things were done which should have brought, and at times did bring, a blush to the English cheeks. There was a Napier in Sind, a Cooper in Lahore, a Dyer in Amritsar, and a few other Englishmen at other places who should not have been there. For sending them there, countenancing their deeds and supporting their policies the governments in India and England bear a responsibility which neither arguments nor excuses will wish away. There were people, mercifully not many, who believed that they had won India by the sword and would and should keep it by the same deadly weapon. There were missionaries who exploited native ignorance, poverty and disease and felt no Christian qualms in pushing Christianity down the unwilling throats of helpless Indians. There were the planters of tea gardens and indigo fields, proud as Lucifer, ravenous for quick riches, who kicked a servant to agonizing death and then turned unmoved to their hand of bridge or their glass of whisky and soda. And there are still people in England today who look at a coloured skin with horror and contempt.

But when all is said and done and the catalogue of foul deeds is

made up and delivered, to how much of the total does the debit amount? Shakespeare notwithstanding, when men die neither their evil deeds nor their shining virtues are interred with them. All that man does in the span granted him lives after him. Nor are nations above this law. The evil that the British did in India shall remain in history to embarrass the rulers and remind the ruled. But the good that they did should not be dismissed with a nod.

* * * *

Two other motives can be considered together. One was preventive self-defence. The fear that other powers would encroach upon the empire, that they would interfere with the precariously constructed spheres of influence, and that they would try to create or encourage subversion within the empire, constantly agitated the imperial mind. By an extension of the English maxim that 'my home is my castle' the empire was taken to be a large preserve whose frontiers and security had to be guarded jealously and assiduously. Many consequences flowed from this assumption. The need for outlying naval bases was stressed. The highways leading into and out of the empire had to be kept open and safe. Policing the bays, the gulfs, the straits and the high seas assumed new importance, and the channels of imperial communication were strung together by a series of naval bastions. Then there was the need for controlling the supply of raw materials in time of war. Not only was it necessary to have and maintain access to raw materials without which English industry would languish and ultimately die, but it was vital to arrange for the safe and smooth despatch of such materials from the empire and their regular and punctual receipt at home. This, too, called for imperial policing and much effort was put into keeping the trade flowing and clear.

Above all, this anxiety to protect the empire and its fruits meant the need for preparedness in advance. Common sense dictated that all precautions be taken in good time, that crises be foreseen and forestalled, that weak spots be discovered and eliminated before their weakness became a risk. Diplomacy, threats, negotiations, bargains, show of force, agreements, treaties, armed conflict, disguised hostilities, frail truces, arbitration, political blackmail, search for allies, appeal to history—no weapon in the armoury of power politics was left unused in the interests of empire. In the tortuous process of safeguarding the preservation of India alone British and imperial Foreign policy and diplomacy were severely tried. In particular the Russian danger to the Indian Empire was one of the principal determinants of British

foreign policy for many years. It produced an Anglo-Turkish entente and then the Crimean War. It led to British interference in Persia's internal affairs and then to the virtual extinction of Persian sovereignty. It encouraged the conquest of the north-west frontier and its many mountain passes through which several imaginative viceroys expected the Russian hordes to pour in. Above all it led to the catastrophic series of Afghan wars which brought much ignominy to English arms, threw the contrast between expediency and morality into painful relief, dealt a serious blow to the economy of the British Indian exchequer, and embittered Anglo-Afghan relations for many a long year.

The question of the north-west frontier of India gives us a clue to another motive. It has already been suggested that much extension of the empire was undertaken in search of stable frontiers. A stable frontier was a line across which the 'uncivilized' hordes could not pass into the 'civilized' British sway. The idea was that there was a constant conflict between the forces of civilization and primitiveness, and if the forces of civilization did not advance in self-protection the forces of primitiveness would, either by a frontal attack or through insidious penetration, undo the work of the civilizing imperial mission. Every uncivilized or unoccupied neighbourhood was a source of danger. Attacks from it must be anticipated in good time so that peace and order stood unmolested by untutored hands. Believing that the best defence was offence and that the motives of others explained and justified much, the imperial bounds were allowed to march outwards until the farthest outpost touched a big power or met the sea. It is the duty of every stable and enlightened ruler to make his boundaries contiguous with stable and (if possible) enlightened states rather than with unsettled and 'backward' communities. 'The civilized must, for the sake of their own preservation, overrun and absorb into their dominion the uncivilized on their borders, for if they do not do so they will themselves be overwhelmed.'[1]

This imperial axiom was often pressed into service in India. The conquest of Sind, which the conqueror himself called a 'good, honest, useful piece of rascality', the annexation of the Punjab when the cunning power of Ranjit Singh had been conveniently withdrawn by fate, the repeated and repeatedly disastrous attempts to put a puppet on the Afghan throne—all this was undertaken in answer to the call of 'self-preservation'. In all such cases 'the fundamental underlying cause was the juxtaposition of stability and instability, of ordered government

1. Sir W. K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan : A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia* (Oxford University Press, London, first ed. 1950, 3rd. ed. revised by M. C. Gillett 1967), p. 76.

and misrule; the Empire pushing on in its search for a frontier and finding no halting place, no physical or man-made barrier, on which its outposts could be aligned and behind which its nationals could move in freedom and safety.'[1]

It is not easy to quarrel with this doctrine, provided that one assumption is uncritically accepted, *viz.*, that the peoples which this theory called 'uncivilized' were really so. But the point is that this is what the Englishman assumed and it fitted in with other ingredients in his imperial outlook. In this sense it had a useful and effective appeal to his mind. The mission of imperialism was one of civilization and progress. The expansion of the empire was felt to be based on this principle. If a tribe or a people was found to be outside the condition which he called civilization—in other words, if these people were not like the English or at least not like the Europeans—it became his duty to conquer them, absorb them and make them a part of the civilized and civilizing machinery of which he was in charge.

How many ends were fulfilled by this simple thought? It satisfied his religious zeal for spreading Christianity, or at least for bringing the infidels under a Christian government. It satisfied his feeling of racial superiority, for was not his race destined both by Providence and by biology to rule over the lesser breed? It satisfied the man on the spot for whom constantly moving boundaries provided unlimited opportunity for altruistic adventure. Above all, it satisfied that part of every Englishman's ego which craved for national prestige and honour and which saw in each annexation and conquest a further sign that the destiny of England was being fulfilled in a right and proper manner. Each year some more red colour spread over the map of the world.[2] Time, aided and abetted by the Englishman, was adding new chapters to imperial history, and woe be to the man to whom this did not bring pride and pleasure; and greater woe be to the man who persisted in his ancient, primitive ways and turned his back on the message of hope and progress which the poor English had, at so much personal discomfort and self-sacrifice, brought to his doorstep. Alas for the man who teaches faster than men will learn !

* * * *

1. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
2. It should be interesting to find out who first thought of red as the imperial colour, and for what reason. In the East red is the colour of blood, and some former British subjects thought that the cartographic red represented their bloodshed by the conquering armies. On the contrary, the English might well have interpreted it as their own blood spent in creating and maintaining the empire. In either case, a gory subject !

It is well known that in the past one of the chief aims of English education was the building up of character rather than the imparting of knowledge. Once the school (preferably a public school) and the university (preferably Oxford or Cambridge) had moulded a man's character, he was good enough for any work anywhere. At some point in the nineteenth century it began to be feared that the Englishman was becoming soft, that life in an over-crowded, urbanized England was drying up his source of inspiration and that an easy, complacent, prosperous existence was gnawing away the fibre of his integrity. This deterioration was not only setting the achievements of the educational system to nought but, what was far more to the point, jeopardising the future of the entire race.

Many saw this danger and expressed their anxiety. '. . . a great change is passing over Englishman', wrote Meredith Townsend of the *Spectator* in 1888 who was a Liberal and had spent long years in India. 'They have become uncertain of themselves, afraid of their own opinions, doubtful of the true teaching of their consciences. They doubt if they have any longer any moral right to rule anyone, themselves almost included. . . . Instead of being content to rule well, to do justice and to love mercy, they are trying themselves by a new standard, a desirable rule is that the governed may applaud, as they phrase it with a certain unctuousness, may "love them".[1] A like fear struck Professor Dicey's heart in 1886 apropos of the Irish Home Rule. He was appalled at the Englishman's growing softness, his preference for peace and quiet, his deliberate avoidance of trouble and difficulty, and his readiness to make concessions and compromises amounting almost to surrender which the earlier generations would have spurned even under the threat of armed rebellion.[2] Riled by England's inability to control or suppress Irish lawlessness, Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall, an Anglo-Indian of distinction, wrote to Morley in 1882: 'What strikes me is the predominance, in the tone in which most of the papers and meetings discuss the event [the Irish murders], of the softer virtues, sympathy, grief, horror, and compassion. I should like a little more fierceness and honest brutality in the national temperament. . . . On the whole . . . the survey of England from this distance impresses one with gloomy forebodings, not of immediate but of gradual decadence; owing to a great concentration of wealth and luxury among certain classes, producing a general indifference, relaxation of fibre, and

1. Meredith Townsend, "Will England Retain India?", *Contemporary Review*, June 1888.
2. A. V. Dicey, *England's Case against Home Rule* (London, 1886), p. 45.

carelessness of what goes on in the outlying parts of the empire. I doubt if "society" would much care if India were lost, so long as their Indian dividends were secured.'[1]

The reader will notice from the dates of these quotations that such fears began to trouble the English equanimity towards the end of the nineteenth century. What did they portend? Certainly not the beginning of the end of imperialism. On the contrary, in India the real imperial age was then at its golden best. Nor can this self-questioning be interpreted as a softening of the imperial will or a weakening of national self-confidence. It was no more than an expression of anxiety about the future of the empire: it should not escape notice that two of these three representative voices spoke from the highest imperial experience—India.

Whatever the source of these doubts may have been they underlined the importance of the empire. Curzon, that pontiff of the imperial Church, answered these questions in his own inimitable way when he told a Birmingham audience: 'As for the priceless asset of national character, without a world to conquer or duty to perform, it would rot to atrophy and inanition.'[2]

Fears thus must be liars for there was still the empire and the service of it was the greatest safeguard against any deterioration of the English character. If the governance of England did not test a man's qualities well enough, let him go out and serve the empire, and all his hidden capacities will come into play, all his virtues instilled by upbringing and education will shine in their purity, his self-confidence will return in high vigour, and by his actions and deeds he will set an example not only to those over whom he ruled but also to the white natives of England. The empire brought many rewards, but it was also an infallible test of a man's character. Thus were the fears of a softening of the moral fibre dissolved in the existence, the need and the purpose of the empire.

* * * *

As imperialism grew to maturity in the Victorian age there was an unmistakable mark on it of that central belief of the Victorians: the idea of progress. It meant a faith in the constant, cumulative and

1. Sir A. C. Lyall to John Morley, 2 June 1882, Sir Mortimer Durand, *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall P.C., K.C.B., G.C.I.E., D.C.L., LL.D.* (London, 1913), pp. 264-265.
2. Lord Curzon speaking at Birmingham in December 1907 on "The True Imperialism"; Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon: being the Authorized Biography of George Nathaniel Marquess Curzon of Kedleston K.G.* (London, n.d.), Vol. III, p. 391.

certain growth of human power and human awareness. Power was taken in its widest connotation to include material advance, intellectual achievement and spiritual attainment.

Material progress meant the improvement and use of science, the mastery over environment, for the betterment of man. By harnessing science to his purpose man could go far in improving the human estate. The result was confidence and optimism: confidence for the living, optimism for those yet to be born. Intellectual advance meant the greater use of reason, the development of ideas and the sharpening of the mind. The capacity of reason to improve the world was infinite. Man makes himself—that had been the eighteenth century message to man and the Victorians built upon it, but they constructed into the edifice more hope than their predecessors had dared to do. Spiritual attainment meant a deeper faith in the destiny of man, in the inscrutable ways of Providence, in the sure, unerring hand of God in every human deed and action. God was kindness and love, and his Help was an assurance that all shall go well. To believe in such a God was to hope for the best. In this manner, the idea of progress gave a message of promise to all human effort.

Two shattering events came as if to confirm this belief in progress. The Industrial Revolution brought the greatest material changes of human history and overwhelmed the Victorians. The Revolution was in the main an English achievement, and, as the problems and penalties of such a breathtaking change were yet not discerned, the Victorians rejoiced in its benefits and were convinced that the future would bring an even richer cornucopia. Then came Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and the idea of evolution, since long in the air, received a final and unmistakable confirmation. To him, as to most of his readers, the theory of spontaneous evolution by natural selection conveyed the certainty of an unbroken 'orderly succession by generation.' No cataclysm had ever desolated the whole world. 'Hence', he concluded his book, 'we may look with some confidence to a secure future of equally unappreciable length. And as natural selection works solely for the good of each being, all corporal and mental environment will tend to progress towards perfection.'

Progress, hope, optimism, perfection—the message came too loud and clear to go unheard. And then there was decisive, material evidence that the message was not false. The railways had come and so had steam navigation, telegraph, gas, drainage system, anaesthetics and so many other things for the relief and alleviation of man's plight. Who

dared deny that the age of progress had arrived or that the age of perfection was not far away? Philosophers appeared on the scene to argue the inevitability of perfection. Starting from Locke's theory of the *tabula rasa*, people like Priestley and Godwin made perfectibility an 'unequivocal characteristic of the human species' (Godwin's words). Nurture was more important than nature. By good education, by free discussion, by just laws and by rational teaching, human nature can be made independent of history as well as of heredity and moulded into a perfect whole. Poets like Shelley and Tennyson sang of the coming end of tyranny and superstition and lighted man's way to hope with lyricism. Herbert Spencer, the greatest intellect of his time and the last master of the broad field of knowledge before the blight of specialization descended on scholarship, summed up the Victorian faith in progress in words which must have been music in the ears of his contemporaries: 'Progress is not an accident but a necessity. What we call evil and immorality must disappear. It is certain that man must become perfect. The ultimate development of the ideal man is certain– as certain as any conclusion in which we place implicit faith; for instance, that all men will die. . . . Always towards perfection is the mighty movement— towards a complete development and a more unmixed good.' [1]

But man does not live by bread alone. There are higher things in life than material comforts and scientific inventions. However tangible the railway and the street-lamp, however impressive the turning wheel and the effect of chloroform, there were some Victorians whom these achievements failed to beguile. Their minds were revolted by the identification of prosperity with higher well-being or of creature comforts with the march of mind.

Carlyle, the prophet of hero-worship and the enemy of machine-worship, called the mechanical trends of the age infidel. Mammon-worship and the cash-nexus were defiling the well of human relationship. The horrors of industrialism were leading mankind to the desolation of a desert, not to the promised land. The dark, satanic mills, the new symbols of a new civilization, were corrupting the human mind and heart and would one day lead to the downfall of man. Coleridge fulminated against 'a few brilliant inventions' which man had purchased at the cost of 'all communion with life and the spirit of nature'. Shelley reminded his readers that 'man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave'. Then there were Cobbet, Newman, Burke,

1. Quoted from J.H. Randall, *The Background of the Modern Mind*, by D.C. Somervelle, *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 6th. ed. 1950), p. 164.

Walter Scott, John Ruskin and Morris who shared the feeling that the Middle Ages, with all their tyranny and death and wars, had been spiritually and morally more solvent than their own times.

Nor did Darwin's theory of evolution uplift every heart. It could be seen as a proof of progress that the modern, civilized man had developed out of the ancient cave man, or rather out of his earlier ancestor, the Monkey. But, was the survival of the fittest a truly magnificent spectacle? Did it not mean the survival of the fittest to survive, with the weaker going to the wall? Was this the survival of the best? Alas, even Darwin could not hold out a prospect of unalloyed joy.

But these misgivings were confined to a comparatively small band which concerned itself with the primacy of man's quest of himself. The great majority gloried in abandoning themselves to the delights conjured up by the philosophers of hope and perfectibility. Materially, the new message appealed to their craving for a more comfortable life. Science was bringing into being new methods and processes which promised to make man's life richer, happier, more varied, more attractive. Intellectually, the new stream of thought satisfied their need for stability and security in their worldly existence. Man was superior to other beings, the roof and crown of creation, and his future was assured by his capacity to develop and improve himself. It was good to belong to the noble race of *homo sapiens* whose infinite prospects were now endorsed by science. Generally the spectacle of increasing wealth, scientific advance and growing commerce seemed to convince the Victorians that human nature itself was becoming better. Not disbelieving what their eyes saw, they began to admit that man was really shedding his selfishness, his superstitions, his irrationality and his aggressiveness. Free trade would usher in an era of international understanding and soon the spectre of war would be exorcized from the face of the earth. Science would conquer error. Education would banish superstition. Reason would rule the world. Good fellowship would draw all men together and a new world would take shape wherein man shall live happily ever afterwards.

Many Victorian minds went through a process of thought which began in doubt and misgiving and self-questioning and by slow but steady growth concluded in belief, confidence and hope. Tennyson typifies this development. In his early years, when Darwin had yet not taken his contemporaries by storm, he expressed the agony of his mind in the hauntingly beautiful lines of *In Memoriam* :

And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,
Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd his creed—
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

In his later years, when the idea of progress had become an unquestioned assumption, the self-same Tennyson in the lilting music of *Locksley Hall* pointed towards the new world of hope which he had ardently made his own:

Science moves, but slowly, slowly creeping on from point to point
Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher
Glares at one that nods and winks before a dying fire,
Yet I doubt not through the ages an increasing purpose runs
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns....
For I dipt into the future, as far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be;
Saw the heavens filled with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furled,
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World.

Undoubtedly the greatest service the idea of progress did to the Victorians was to make them hopeful, confident and courageous. Hope, confidence and courage were also the basic ingredients of the imperial urge. If man was the inheritor of a long past and hopeful of even a better future, his life was worth living; and this gave a new importance to what he did. The theory that his life was a poor thing, nasty, brutish and short, now seemed but a ghastly tale told by a primitive in some dark, unseemly age. Now the great age had begun anew, ringing out the old, decrepit, fruitless years, and at last man had discovered himself. This awareness, this consciousness, of his powers made him great in his own eyes. Nothing lay beyond his powers; nothing was impossible.

Scientific inventions had proved it. Prosperity had illustrated it. New thinking had confirmed it. Man's contribution to human history had a permanent mark on it. What he did was never wasted. This heartened him and opened before him an unbroken vista of still greater achievements to come.

What is true of the individual is doubly true of the community. If man, given to disease and death and other frailties, could attain so much, what infinite opportunities lay open before the nation? England had been great once; now was the time to help her become great again—this time still greater. All the energies, the hopes and the aspirations of a newly-awakened people were harnessed in the pursuit of this goal. There was an outburst of new thinking, literature blossomed forth in song and story, faith reasserted itself in heart, science advanced quickly to occupy the hitherto no-man's-land between faith and philosophy, political reform gave the mother of parliaments an agreeable aspect, bonds of religious intoleration were at first loosened and then altogether removed. A new pulsating life quickened the nation. However, England was a small island and no matter how fast it moved or how many riches it amassed, its rocky coasts could not stretch into the lapping waters. But was it not an age of opportunity, and was there not an avenue already half-open which could lead to glory? Imperialism was the answer.

Everything in the idea of progress pointed towards further imperial advance. Having discovered the delights of progress, it was the duty of England to share them with the less fortunate races of the world. The fruits of enlightenment must be passed on to those who did not have them and knew not their taste. The intellectual forces engendered by the free use of reason should be made available, albeit in small digestible doses, to those still fumbling in the dark well of ignorance. Perhaps even a part of the confidence of man in himself may be conveyed to the black man, at least as long as this did not make him question the supremacy of the white man. The blessings of education, of learning and of the use of the English language, must be shared with the orientals, whose own literature was scanty and worthless and not fit to be put in the scales against one shelf-full of Western scholarship (or at least that is what Macaulay said). The occidental man could now look beyond the horizon and see much that he knew he could achieve. The Eastern man should at least be made to lift his gaze from the ground under his feet and learn to look up. Surely it would take him years and years to look into the future with the Western man, but in the meantime he

should be guided, directed, advised, ruled over for his own good, perhaps punished a little as all intractable children should be, promised a little more freedom, like toys and sweets to good children, if he persisted and pleased the master. This was the White Man's Burden.

Of course today we know that the Victorian age was nothing like the golden age of perfection which the Victorians themselves took it to be. A glimpse of the beginning of a new world dazzled the unaccustomed eye which saw many visions but only a little reality. The new convert has always a surplus of ardour. Much was read into the new science, the new philosophy and the new prosperity which was more apparent to the frenzied heart than to the cool intellect. But, as Nietzsche said, convictions are prisons. Once the Victorians had come to believe in their rich destiny, nothing could dissipate their hope or poison their optimism. Perhaps self-righteousness is better than ignorance, and hopeful enthusiasm superior to black despair. However exaggerated their self-confidence, however magnified their belief in progress, and however hyperbolical their pronouncements about themselves, there is not the least doubt that they came to possess a faith in themselves, a burning conviction that the Englishman was the finest prophet of the new values to be sent to foreign lands; there to preach the virtues of his own superiority, to civilize the poor wretches ignorant of the meaning of life, to bring them the comforts of modern living, to bless them with peace and law and order, to bring them the light of Western knowledge, and to take them on to the path which led to the dignity of man and the sovereignty of virtue.

* * * *

'The sentiment of empire may be called innate in every Briton', said William Gladstone. 'If there are exceptions, they are like those of men born blind or lame among us. It is part of our patrimony: born with our birth, dying only with our death; incorporating itself in the first elements of our knowledge, and interwoven with all our habits of mental action upon public affairs.'[1] So, in the opinion of one of the greatest Englishmen of his age, imperialism was in the English blood. It became a part of the English nature, a part of his total life. The Englishman was an imperialist in the same sense in which he had a white skin.

It is perhaps more convincing to see imperialism as the religion

1. W.E. Gladstone, "England's Mission", *The Nineteenth Century*, September 1878.

of the Englishman: religion in both its narrower sense of creed and dogma and ritual and its wider meaning of faith or an organized system of thought which inspires and governs life's tendencies. To view imperialism in this way is not at all fanciful. All beliefs and convictions, if held with tenacity and sincerity for a period of time, take on the aspect of religion. Faith is but an instinctive trust in the righteousness of one's ideas, opinions, values and principles of conduct. This belief is more a matter of heart and mind than that of the head. It is unnecessary to argue it: it is taken for granted by the faithful. The ritual, the church and the elaborate organization come afterwards. The central belief, the undivided devotion to a cause, the unquestioned assumption that the cause is the best of all causes, are the heart of the matter.

In this sense the imperialists themselves have time and again confessed their faith and proudly worn its badge. Sir Harry Johnstone, the pro-consul of Central Africa, pronounced in 1890 that his only religion was the expansion of the British Empire. Stung by the jibes of the anti-imperialists, Milner sprang to the defence of his faith with strong words: 'Imperialism as a political doctrine has been represented as something tawdry and superficial. In reality it has all the depth and comprehensiveness of a religious faith. Its significance is moral even more than material. It is a mistake to think of it as principally concerned with painting the map red. There is quite enough painted red already. It is not a question of a couple of hundred thousand square miles more or less. It is the question of preserving the unity of a great race, of enabling it, by maintaining that unity, to develop freely on its own line, and to continue to fulfil its distinctive mission in the world.'[1] General Gordon was something of a mystic and took his imperial obligations in the spirit of a fanatic who dies at the post for his faith which, by his own construction, demands the ultimate sacrifice. To Curzon there could be nothing more natural and befitting than dedicating his *Problems of the Far East* 'To those who believe that the British Empire is, under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has seen'. Canon Hensley Henson of Westminster declared in 1902 that 'to his thinking, this imperial mission represented a divine vocation'.[2]

This opinion, that imperialism was not a mere political pheno-

1. Alfred (later Lord) Milner, quoted in Robert A. Huttenback, *The British Imperial Experience* (New York, 1966), pp. 89-90.
2. See Colin Cross, *The Liberals in Power 1905-1914* (London, 1963), p. 43.

menon but something far deeper and rooted in the human need for a spiritual ballast, was not confined to those who were charged with the duty of beating the imperial drum. Two very different intellectuals—both trained scholars, not politicians—stand witness to this. Professor A. V. Dicey, a jurist of high stature at Oxford, believed that 'Imperialism is to all who share it a form of passionate feeling; it is a political religion, for it is public spirit touched with emotion'.[1] Bertrand Russell recalls how W. A. S. Hewins, the economist and tariff reformer who became the first to preside over that high seminary of the gospel of Leftism, the London School of Economics, confessed to him that he had given up his faith in the Roman Catholic church and instead embraced the faith in the British Empire.[2]

To dismiss all this as a collection of impassioned outbursts summoned forth by the frenzy of a singular age is to show a complete ignorance of English character. The Englishman is notoriously undemonstrative by nature. He is almost ashamed of showing his true feelings. The more he hides his feelings the higher he rises in his own estimation. Phrases like 'straight face' and 'iron self-control' are expressions of virtue in the English vocabulary. He is particularly distrustful of all varieties of religious fervour. His convictions and beliefs he puts behind a heavy curtain which he calls his privacy. To ask him about his church or party affiliations is to pry into his personal, private affairs, and thus to affront him. Such is the public face he turns, or prefers to turn, towards the world and by this he wants to be known and recognized.

It is, therefore, a most remarkable phenomenon that in the imperial age we find him not only making a public confession but proudly displaying the inscribed banners of his faith. Long decades of self-repression are at last over and the natural, genuine, spontaneous feelings gush forth to flood the English mind. The straight face—straight since such a length of time that the outside world had come to accept the contortion as the natural lineament—drops its mask. The iron control breaks down, and with it crumble the ancient walls of reticence, reserve and restraint. The best among the race now openly talk of their mission, their enthusiasm, their ambitions and their good deeds. The common man chatters away in syllables of mirth. It seems as if the doubts, the repression, the make-beliefs of a nation have taken flight

1. A. V. Dicey, *Law and Opinion in England* (London, 2nd ed. 1914), p. 457.
2. Bertrand Russell, *Portraits from Memory and other Essays* (London), 1958, p. 76.

before this welcome wind of self-awareness. Confidence gives tongue to silent thoughts and England reveals herself in a myriad ways.

Above all she reveals in her profession of the new faith of imperialism. It is not at all ridiculous to see in imperialism the panopoly of an organized church. The works of Lugard and Milner were the Holy Writ. The writings and commentaries of Froude, Seeley and others made up the *corpus theologicum*. Disraeli, Salisbury and Rosebery were the high priests. Cecil Rhodes and Curzon were the leading missionaries who spread the gospel with the help of a host of devoted workers. Kipling wrote the carols. Henty, Buchan and a score of empire novelists supplied the Books of Prophets. The empire was marked out into holy sees to which pro-consuls were appointed by the head of the imperial church. The governors of eastern, central and western Africa, of the West Indies and of other possessions, were the bishops. The enthronement of the viceroy of India was, in pomp and punctilio, like the ordination of a primate. Every district in India was a diocese where the bishop supervised his flock, kept his own church in order and received his instructions from the see of Calcutta or Delhi or Lahore.

The whole body of clergy was fanatically devoted to the church. Their existence had no meaning or purpose but in its service. Many of them took their holy vows so earnestly that they never married lest, taken in the toils of this world, they might falter and forget their resolve of total devotion. They lived far away from home, in heat and dust and boredom, amongst their enemies, amid hostile forces, wherever duty called. Some of them died of disease and exhaustion and the church acknowledged their debt to virtue. Some were murdered by the infidels and the church was forced to employ its militant arm to ensure the life and security of the next missionary.

The picture drawn here may be a little exaggerated and the colours a little high (all pictures are ideals); but little remains behind in imperialism if you take out the religious intensity, the devoted fanaticism, the unbelievable loyalty which the faithful gave to their faith. The ultimate triumph of imperialism was awaited with a fervour which good Christians reserve for the Second Coming.

To underline this mystical force of imperialism is not to criticise. All great movements in the history of the world have been religious in the eyes of their upholders and practitioners. Marxism is a religion in itself, and the Soviet and Chinese schools may well be its Protestant and Catholic versions. Nationalism has, many times, operated as a

church and shown all the weaknesses and strengths of religion. When the tidal forces of change come rushing in, reason is soon swept away and it is only the waters of faith which surge and swirl until the old trembles and falls and the new stands erect and triumphant.

## CHAPTER 4

# The Imperial Mind

Ideas draw their breath and spark from the mind, and our next inquiry must concern itself with the mind which produced and nurtured the imperial idea. What went into the making of this mind? Was it consciously and assiduously moulded to receive the new doctrine? If so, by whom and in what ways? Who were the representative minds of their generation and how and in what fashion did they reach the imperial conviction? And, finally, how did this mind manifest itself in literature—that glorious flowering of a nation's intellect and imagination which uncovers, inevitably and unerringly, the half-conscious thoughts of a people and the latent stirrings of a society?

* * * *

But before seeking an answer to these questions we must remove one obstacle from our way. It is generally believed, even in knowledgeable circles, that imperialism was the exclusive concern of the conservative mind: whether we spell the word with a small or a capital letter. This is an untenable assumption which owes its origin and wide currency to the false and half-true contentions of the enemies of conservatism. The Conservatives were not continuously in power in Britain from the rise of imperialism to the dissolution of the empire. Had the Liberals and Socialists been even half as anti-imperialist as they chose to paint themselves the empire would not have lasted so long. The anti-imperialism of the centre and the left was a gesture made in the interest of party warfare and an effort to create an attractive image of itself; by no means was it a serious plank in the political programme.

Let us take the liberals (or Liberals) first. During the years of the

imperial flush and vigour several names leap to attention whose reputation was great, whose minds were seminal and whose ideas gave substance and support to the imperial idea. All of them were liberals by political affiliation: perhaps also liberal by the tenor and drift of their intellect. There was Sir Henry Maine, the venerated author of *Ancient Law*. There was Sir Fitzjames Stephen, a former law member of the Viceroy's Council in India, who expounded an interesting melange of liberal-imperial ideas in his *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.* Then there were Henry Sidgwick and John Seeley who looked at the empire from the top of their liberal fortress and were pleased with the view. These were all Cambridge men. Oxford spoke in the person of that reputed constitutional legist, A.V. Dicey. These men had another link to bind them apart from liberalism: they belonged to the Utilitarian and Evangelical schools of thought.

The *Spectator* was at this time the leading organ of liberal imperialism (or imperial liberalism, if you can find the difference between them). Men who wrote for it made up a formidable company and commanded much influence in the imperial enclave. Three distinguished journalists laid the law from the editorial chair: R. H. Hutton, Meredith Townsend and St. Leo Strachey. Edward Dicey, the leader-writer of the *Daily Telegraph* and later the editor of the *Observer*, gave his full support to the spectatorial line.

Utilitarianism held sway over these liberal minds. For them social progress was governed by the inflexible laws of logic, jurisprudence and political economy which Utility had laid down. They saw the danger with which idealistic and emotional democracy threatened the civilized life of Britain. They underlined the importance of reason in politics and reprimanded the politician who surrendered the virtue of scientific and systematic rule to the pleasure of winning a few short-lived rounds of applause. Gladstone's decision to give home rule to Ireland was tested by this standard and found wanting. Their weakness – if that it was – lay in viewing every imperial and colonial question through the mist of their obsession with Ireland. They were no friends of those in Asia and Africa who wanted an end to British control. Their answer to such demands amounted to a beautifully clear alliance of Utilitarianism and Imperialism. The empire must go on in the supreme interest of progress. The crying need of the world was progress and this could best be achieved under the protective and enlightened cover of pax Britannica. Once the benign forces of imperialism rolled themselves back, everything that induced and encouraged progress will depart with

them. Strict order, impartial law, education, quiet and peace, freedom of contract, safe trade—nothing will remain to usher in the desired era of progress.

In the empire these things were made possible only by the adhesive quality of the imperial framework. If necessity arose, even the use of military force could not be spared in the interest of progress. Many of these men were lawyers by training, and if law has done its duty well it tends to make its votaries authoritarian lovers of law and order. Few good lawyers find a lively imagination to their taste or of any use. For them the spectacle of a handful of British soldiers and administrators keeping the vast Indian spaces in order and peace and the innumerable Indian peoples and tribes in check and control was truly exhilarating. It was good to see with one's own eyes the march of progress in foreign lands directed by British hands. The advance might not have been fast enough for their complete satisfaction, but it was sure and certain and consistent and will one day ring in a great revolution which will be the crown of the imperial effort and will for ever resound to the credit of England.

The dream was noble and the ideal was undoubtedly high, but it led to the liberal upholders of the empire into contradictions on which neat-minded historians love to feast their eyes. One was the operation by which liberty was exported wrapped in force. The ideal was to bring civilization, progress and liberty to countries and peoples which, it was said, had never been blessed by them. But these virtues were to be forced upon the recipients by means which were not always liberal. It was not liberalism, but unashamed arrogance compounded with ignorance, which made Macaulay pronounce on the utter worthlessness of all oriental learning. It was not liberalism but naked aggressiveness which made the British force commercial and diplomatic intercourse on the distant and unwilling Chinese and so to provoke the Opium War of 1839-40. It was difficult for them to keep their liberalism and imperialism in fine equilibrium and often pure imperialism, uncorrupted by any liberal thought, triumphed and mocked their professions of liberalism.

Another contradiction is shown up by the manner in which the liberals combined their belief in Free Trade with their imperial faith. On principle the doctrine of Free Trade did not lead to the acquisition of territory, nor did it mean that the flag must fly before the traders arrived. But the liberals were happily rescued from this cruel dilemma by the non-cooperation of the European powers who refused to subscribe

to the British philosophy of Free Trade. And thus there was no alternative to annexing territory in order to keep the 'selfish' protectionists out. And so was born what an historian has so engagingly called the imperialism of free trade.

Liberal imperialism was not a freak of British politics. It dominated national politics and thinking for too many years to be dismissed as an interlude without significance. It commanded the support of a large intellectual circle. Men of the calibre of Dicey and Cromer, Milner and Maine, Dilke and Seeley, Rosebery and Joseph Chamberlain, were not dim-witted. The contradiction between their radicalism and their love of liberty at home and their burning faith in imperialism abroad was not hidden from the eyes of the best of them. How did they view it? Did they explain it away by woolly arguments or vague platitudes?

Broadly speaking, and ignoring the minor varieties of explanation, the liberals reacted to this predicament in four ways. One was the argument, already developed, that imperialism, far from being a selfish and corrupt and immoral system, aimed high in trying to pass on civilization and peace and progress to the unfortunate who did not enjoy them. Thus they confirmed the general principle, shared by nearly all shades of political opinion, that the eventual end of imperial rule was the independence of the empire, for which it was being trained and prepared by the imperial tutors. A second, more frank, explanation was that an empire was necessary to the safety and security, as also to the greatness, of the country, and as such beyond debate. If a small island of limited resources and unlimited ambitions wanted to be counted a factor in the world it had to be an imperial power, and to question this was contrary to patriotism, nationalism and such other virtues. A third argument, even more frank but less engaging in perspective, was the honest admission that liberal principles applied to the civilized, white people alone. The validity of concepts like equality, democracy, freedom and toleration was circumscribed by geography and race. The inferior races and the tropical areas could do very well without them. The final explanation was nothing less than surrender. Faced by a dilemma which had only two horns, tired of walking the tight rope day after day after day, stung by the taunts of their enemies, sensitive to the charge of inconsistency, sensible of the risk of being called insincere, some of the liberal imperialists gaily threw away all liberal assumptions, and at one happy stroke freed themselves from political discomfort, intellectual strain and any sense of guilt.

*   *   *   *

The predicament of being radical in domestic policy and imperial, even jingoist, in foreign affairs was not reserved for the liberals. The socialists lived under a similar curse. Almost unlimited evidence can be adduced to prove this from the pronouncements of British Fabians and Socialists. A short selection of such views will, however, do to establish the point.

The Webbs, charming and prolific parents of much of the socialist thinking of their age, expressed their considered opinion, in an article in the *New Statesman* ("What is Socialism" in issue no. xvii), that any part of the empire containing the 'non-adult' races would not be ready even for self-government, not to speak of independence, for 'many generations', and that some portions of it would 'conceivably never' be fit for looking after themselves. Many years later Beatrice Webb noted in her diary: 'Even coloured peoples of India and Africa would not relish exchanging the easy-going tolerance and administrative experience of Great Britain for the crude insolence and racial contempt of the American governing class.'[1] Bernard Shaw, another elder statesman of the British Left, had already, in his *Fabianism and the Empire* (1900), agreed that if the Chinese were incapable or unwilling to establish peaceful conditions in their country so that trade could prosper and civilization flourish, then the Powers had a duty to establish these conditions for them. Here one despairs of distinguishing between the socialism of the Webbs and the imperialism of a Disraeli or a Churchill, or between Shaw's Fabianism and Palmerston's or Joseph Chamberlain's liberal imperialism.

A recent historian of the Leftist weekly *New Statesman* has claimed that 'the *New Statesman* and new statesmanly ideas, played an enormously important part in educating the political Labour movement up to the idea that India could and should be freed'.[2] This assertion does not fit in with the tenor and substance of much of what the paper printed on India. It was only towards the end of British rule in India that it clearly came out in favour of a withdrawal, and that at a time when most intelligent Englishmen had realised that the once-strong imperial hand had palsied beyond cure and that the imperial coat must now be cut according to the British cloth available. It was neither the philosophy of *New Statesman* nor the anti-empire bias of the leaders of the Labour movement, but the rude and sharp aftermath of the war, which

1. *Beatrice Webb's Diaries 1924-1932*, ed. by Margaret Cole (London, 1956), entry of 28 October 1927, pp. 157-158.
2. Edward Hyams, *The New Statesman: The History of the First Fifty Years 1913-1963* (London, 1963), p. 305.

dictated the feeling on India. Mr. Hyams himself tells us that C. D. Sharp, who edited the paper for eighteen years, was 'quite as ready to shoulder the white man's burden as any Kiplingesque empire builder'.[1] Anyway, if the efforts of Sharp and Kingsley Martin were as successful as they themselves would like to think, how is it that not a single African possession had been given independence when Attlee's government laid down their seals of office in 1951?

Whatever the admirers of the *New Statesman* may think or say the fact is that imperial policy was made not by journalists but by party leaders and ministers. Let us call some of these authoritative witnesses and hear their weighty words. George Lansbury, leader of the Labour parliamentary party, President of the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities (1926 at Brussels), president of the League against imperialism, is not on record as having said that the British Empire was unnecessary, undesirable, illiberal or immoral, and that he stood for its abolition. Josiah Wedgwood, a Labour M.P. and a former vice-chairman of the Labour Party, declared in 1926 that 'we' could not allow the development of Palestine to be retarded because a few Arab reactionaries preferred their territory to be in Asia rather than in Europe. His words, uttered in a speech in the House of Commons on 7 December, recall Balfour's defence of his declaration: and Balfour was not a socialist. Again, on 26 February 1935, speaking in the House on Indian reforms, he hotly denied that if Labour came to power it would hand India over to the Indians. Curzon had said the same thing many years ago and had been torn to pieces for his sins by the Labour members.

The idea of abandoning the empire was in fact as far away from the minds of the Labour leaders as it had always been from those of the Conservatives. In *the Labour Party Perspective* (1937) Attlee wrote: 'Whatever may have been the history of the acquisition of the British Colonial Empire, the fact remains that Great Britain is responsible for the welfare of millions of coloured peoples. It is not possible simply to relinquish control.... Over a large area the peoples are not ready yet for self-government, and in these territories the Labour Party considers the British Government must act as trustee of the native races.' This on the empire in general. On India he was even more firm and his arguments echo the points made by Anglo Indian administrators and conservative viceroys: 'The Labour Party has always fully accepted the right of the Indian peoples to govern themselves, but it has recognized that the problem involved in developing self-governing institutions in a

1. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

great continent inhabited by peoples who differ in language, race, and creed is no easy one. The long period of British rule has created a situation in which there have been many rights acquired by particular sections of the Indian people. It is not right to abandon control without taking care to see that these rights will be respected. "India for the Indians" is a simple slogan but it is necessary to see what it means in terms of human life. There is no particular gain in handing over the peasants and workers of India to be exploited by their own capitalists and landlords.'

These words must have fallen like music on the ears of every Indian civilian worth his salt. Read any speech, diary or autobiography by any Anglo-Indian administrator and you will find two arguments against leaving India which repeat themselves like a revolving door: the minorities must not be left at the mercy of the Majority, and the peasants, the ryot, must be protected against their own Indian exploiters. If this be the limit of the Labour leaders' fertility of mind and radicalism of political thinking, why not go to the original source and read Lytton and Curzon, Sir Walter Lawrence and Sir Valentine Chirol, Ronaldshay and Sir Michael Darling, who said the same thing in infinitely better English prose?

Nor did Attlee show any concern for the future of the Palestine Arabs in the light of his party's support to Zionism. A Labour government had issued a white paper on Palestine in October 1930, and since then every annual party conference resolved in favour of the Jewish National Home, stating in the same breath that British obligations towards both Arabs and Jews were of equal weight and were not in any sense irreconcilable. In the December 1944 Labour Party annual conference Attlee clarified that the party's support to the establishment of the Jewish Home was meaningless unless it was understood that the Jews must be allowed to enter Palestine 'in such numbers as to become a majority, the Arabs being encouraged to move out as the Jews move in'.

It was a Labour government (1945-1950), the first in British history to rule in its own right, which, in its negotiations with Egypt for a new treaty, stipulated exactly the same conditions which all previous Conservative administrations had put down. The Suez was still as dear to Attlee as it had been to Disraeli seventy years ago: it was still the swing-door of the empire no matter who ruled England.

Attlee's colonial secretary, Arthur Creech Jones, in addressing the House of Commons Committee on Supply on 29 July 1947, used words

whch we have often read in Victorian imperialist manifestoes and speeches: 'We believe that we are not in our territories for our own limited material advantage. We are there in the general service of the colonial peoples. We hope there will be a common appreciation and understanding of our efforts.' After this it is deeply satisfying to recall that Milner had close associations with early Fabian leaders, especially the Webbs. Had he lived beyond his allotted span of life it is not easy to see what would have stood in his way of giving the Labour Party the pleasure of his company.

Of course there was a lunatic fringe among the socialists (which movement is without it?) whose members could indulge in the harmless luxury of abusing imperialism and calling for an immediate abandonment of all colonial responsibilities: harmless because they knew very well that there was no chance of their ideas being put into practice.

One such figure was Keir Hardie who made such an ass of himself during his Indian tour of 1907 that people in England called him by such epithets as a fool, a ridiculous buffoon, a crank and talker of nonsense. On hearing that he had been received by the Viceroy, Morley, the Liberal secretary of state for India, wrote to Minto, the viceroy: '... he is an observant, hard-headed, honest fellow, but rather vain and crammed full of vehement preconceptions, especially on all the most delicate and dubious parts of politics.'[1] Another man of a similar kind was Henry Brailsford, about whom it is sufficient to quote Maynard Keynes who knew him well and shared his loyalty to the Left: 'Brailsford ... seems to me have every defect—almost incredibly misinformed and ill-informed, carrying credulity to the point where it is almost certifiable, extraordinarily tenacious in a frightfully boring sort of way.'[2] Unmindful of such testimonials a section of the Left used him, built him up into a front-rank journalist though rather of a one-track variety, and quoted him with relish on all sorts of things and issues. Perhaps he had the ears of the party leaders, but certainly not their attention or sympathy, for what the party actually did in imperial affairs was precisely the opposite of what Brailsford recommended.

Why did the socialists subscribe to the imperial idea, almost always in practice, often also in theory? Sometimes big inconsistencies lend themselves to better explanation than the small ones. The socialist mind

1. For details of Hardie's activities in India and the sources for these criticisms see my *Britain and Muslim India* (London, 1963), pp. 56-57.
2. Letter to Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*, written some in 1937, Edward Hyams, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

was influenced by several factors, practical and ideological, which won it over to an acceptance of imperialism or, at different times, at least to an acquiescence.

Probably economic considerations took precedence over others. The socialists, even more than the Liberals and the Conservatives, were concerned with the raising of the common man's (the English common man's) standard of living. Economic prosperity of a country was a pre-condition of this. With severely limited resources a country of the size of Britain could find economic and material progress only in an empire. Bevin once admitted in the House of Commons that the food, and sometimes the life, of the English workingman depended on the existence of the empire. Nor should we forget that in 1870 one hundred and four thousand workingmen of London signed a petition to Queen Victoria protesting against the alleged anti-imperialist policy of Gladstone's government. It did not need an acute intelligence for the working classes to recognize how much they stood to gain from the continuance and expansion of the empire. It did not need much political acumen for their leaders to realise that the achievement of their ideals depended on national prosperity vouchsafed by the empire. In this way imperialism was an indirect but integral part of the socialist programme.

This hard-headed and convenient approach derived much spiritual sustenance from two ideological arguments. One was that as progressive, radical thinking was done in England, it was unfair and contrary to the socialist creed of human brotherhood not to be able to make the empire a beneficiary of this thinking. The correct socialist policies formulated at home must be passed on to the subject races who in the fulness of time would perhaps evolve into socialist societies. This was for the good of the empire and its people. How close were the socialists to their Victorian forbears who set out to light the path of the natives to progress! Another consideration might have been the hoped-for greatness of the socialist world. The empire must be saved from breaking up so that some day in the future when socialism triumphed a large portion of the world should be ready to make up the utopia which would no longer be a utopia.

But the overriding factor was the *milieu* in which British socialism was born and bred. It was in the high noon of imperialism that fabianism and socialism emerged as political doctrines. However much their ideals and domestic policies were at odds with those of other parties, they could not escape the over-powering contemporary sentiment about the empire. The air was rich with imperial strains. Every

Englishman, no matter what political opinions he held, shared in the glory of the empire. In such an atmosphere it was hard indeed to be English and not to be an imperialist. When socialism was born one of the fairies which came to bless the infant was imperialism. The misfortune (or fortune if you do not like the argument) of the infant was that it never became adult enough to break the spell cast upon him by that resplendant fairy carrying a wand of gold and diamonds.

* * * *

With the impediments of confusing liberalism or socialism with anti-imperialism out of our way, we can now see more clearly the contours of the imperial mind. Instead of attempting an abstract and theoretical analysis it will probably be more illuminating to consider the reflections, meditations and exhortations of some well-known imperial minds.

Towards the latter half of the Victorian era several pro-consuls, working in different parts of the empire, were busy in teaching the British public to be imperialist in outlook. There was John Macdonald in Canada, Alfred Deakin in Australia, Richard Seddon in New Zealand, Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, Cromer in Egypt, and Curzon in India. But except the last three named here they were not original imperial minds but transmitters and amplifiers of imperialism. The original thinking was done by others in Britain to whom we now turn.

John Ruskin (1819-1900) eloquent, emotional but yet restrained, a Lowland Scot (like Carlyle and Walter Scott), combined a refined appreciation of beauty with a reasoned loyalty to the empire. He distrusted democracy and the will or the ability of the people to improve their estate. The social order could only be reformed by the intelligence and goodwill of the upper, governing classes. Like Coleridge and Carlyle he believed that only the best minds were capable of leading the masses towards progress: a line of thinking which clearly connects him with Carlyle's philosophy of hero worship.[1] He upheld the conservative sanctities of order, authority, reverence and obedience. Everything that was in conflict with these principles—radicalism and revolutionary ideas—was roundly denounced: liberty and equality negate order and government. Living up to what he preached, he was one of the distin-

1. Carlyle himself was an imperialist of the pre-imperial age. 'To the English People in World History', he wrote in 1839, 'there have been, shall I prophesy, two grand tasks assigned? Hugelooming through the dim tumult of the always incommensurable Present Time, outlines of two tasks disclose themselves: the great industrial task of conquering some half or more of this Terraqueous Planet of man; then secondly, the grand Constitutional task of sharing, in some pacific endurable manner, the fruit of said conquest, and showing all people how it might be done'; Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism*, 1839 (Everyman's Library ed.), p. 214.

guished band of writers—Carlyle, Kingsley and Tennyson—who sprang to the defence of Governor Eyre in 1865 when he was being criticised for having put down with a mailed fist the revolt of the negroes in Jamaica. Colonial expansion was a worthier task for England than the pursuit and worship of mammon. For a man of such ideas it was but natural to be swept along the tide of imperialism. In his inaugural lecture at Oxford in 1870 he held up colonial expansion as a task worthy of England: 'that is what she must do or perish'.[1] Ruskin's importance lies as much in the ideas he expounded as in the influential position he enjoyed. Imperialism was then being advocated by many, but it was the men of authority and prestige, like Carlyle and Froude and Ruskin himself, who found it an interesting novelty and left it a powerful creed.

If Ruskin was the theoretician of imperialism in the mid-nineteenth century, Palmerston was its high practitioner. In the celebrated debate on the Don Pacifico Affair in the House of Commons on 24-28 June 1850, in a speech lasting four hours, he voiced an argument which had a very long shadow. By her traditions and institutions England was the natural palladium of liberty throughout the world. Liberty was indivisible and must be safeguarded wherever it is attacked and whoever attacked it. To be able to stand guard on the shrine of liberty England must be strong, powerful and fearless, so that her power is recognized, her strength is feared and her wrath dreaded. Not only must she possess this power, she should also be seen to exercise it with confidence and without hesitation. Her influence and fame should be the shield behind which liberty would flourish and civilization flower. This enunciation, made in such unmistakable terms that only the reckless could ignore it, was the text given by a Whig and taken to heart by the Tory imperialists. Soon it became the centre-piece of the imperial argument that the protection of liberty led to world-wide responsibilities and willy-nilly to world-wide dominion. This was the core of the imperial message; the rest was but a Commentary.

If Ruskin's was the voice of Toryism and Palmerston's that of Whiggism, John Bright spoke for the Radicals of England. And the Radicals, if Bright correctly echoed their thoughts, were no less proud of their empire in India or elsewhere. In a speech in the House of Commons in 1853 he expressed the very same imperial pride for which the radicals of his day often attacked the tory admirers of the empire: 'The nations they [the Romans] conquered were impressed so indelibly

1 See John Ruskin, *Lectures on Art* (London, new ed. 1887), pp. 39-40. It is said that his inaugural address had a great influence on Rhodes; R. Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

with the intellectual character of their masters, that after fourteen centuries of decadence the traces of civilization are still distinguishable. Why should we not act a similar part in India?'[1] Nor did he love the British sway over India any less dearly than did the reactionary tories. In a speech at Birmingham on 16 April 1879 he expressly deprecated the idea of abandoning India.[2]

John Bryce (1838-1922), a prolific and original inquirer into historical and political truths, was impressed as much by the temporal power of kings and states as by the intellectual fertility of empires. His first book, *The Holy Roman Empire*, which won him the coveted Arnold Prize in 1862 when he was a fellow of Oriel, showed how much he admired the great qualities of the Germans and the ways in which Bismarck was raising Prussia to European paramountcy. His study of the inner meaning and significance of the Holy Roman Empire led him to an appreciation of the nascent German imperialism. Later in his life he compared the Roman Empire with the British Empire in India in two long essays, and unhesitatingly gave his *imprimatur* to imperial rule in India in particular and in other places in general.[3]

With Sir Charles Dilke we come to the well of imperialism undefiled. On his return from extensive travels he published in 1868 a 2-volume description of what he called *Greater Britain*. Sub-titled "A Record of Travel in English-speaking Countries during 1866 and 1867", the book emphasized the economic and military value of uncivilized colonies and disparaged the alleged worth of white colonies. (In this he was anticipating latter-day imperialism.)

His ideas were simple and forceful. The annexation of uncivilized countries need cause England no qualms of conscience. The British people are uniquely equipped by Providence to occupy a predominant position in the world and to succeed in the task of governing others. Britain must not miss this opportunity of carrying the blessings of civilization to barbaric lands and peoples. Anyway there is no sentiment of nationality in these dark places. The worst imaginable British rule is preferable to the best conceivable government by the native rulers—that is, in the eyes of the mass of the uncivilized people themselves. There is no possibility of India being able to govern herself in a reason-

1. Quoted in Richard Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
2. See John Bright, *Public Addresses* (ed. by Thomas Rogers, London, 1879), p. 502.
3. See his *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India* (London, 1914). For Bryce in general see H. A. L. Fisher, *James Bryce* (London, 1927), and A. J. Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (London, 1967).

able future, and so England must govern her 'in the interests of the People of Hindustan'. However, the only justification for our presence in India is the education for freedom of Indian races'. England's mission out there is 'to plant free institutions among a dark-skinned race'. But British rule will never become popular in India because it is too rigidly Western and lacks adaptability. Conditioned by its own democratic origin, it has humbled the old upper classes without putting in their place a new middle class. A numerous class of educated natives has been brought into existence, but without the offer of a worth-while career. Besides, the English in India persist in looking down on all natives.

There is much perceptive intelligence in these words and a shrewd analysis of the glory and the predicament of the British in India. Several times he put his finger on the right spots and invited the attention and thought of his people to the dangers and risks invovled in maintaining the imperial fabric. But the book also reflected the jingoistic temper of the age, and alas! most people read it for its accents of blustering patriotism rather than for its acute observations. This alone explains the phenomenal success of its sales. It rapidly ran through three editions. In the United States it had an immense sale. In France it won the praise of Thiers. It got long and laudatory reviews in leading journals. Lord John Russell put the seal of official Whig favour on it by recommending it to students of colonial affairs. *The Times* (31 March 1869) bestowed on it the dignity and the fame of a four-column review.

James Froude stands midway between Carlyle and Seeley. Carlyle influenced him greatly and he, in his turn, anticipated much of Seeley. Under his editorship the *Fraser's Magazine* printed a number of articles on the colonial question, and during 1870-71 he himself wrote some articles for the journal which mounted a trenchant attack on the prevalent anti-imperialist or indifferentist attitude. The ground was being prepared for the acceptance of imperialism as a popular belief.

Another shot at the anti-imperialist defences was fired by Winwood Reade who wrote *The Martyrdom of Man* (1872) to refute the 'sickly school of politicians who declare that all countries belong to their inhabitants and that to take them is a crime'. 'The great Turkish and Chinese Empires, the lands of Morocco, Abysinnia and Thibet, will be eventually filled with free, industrious and educated populations. But these people will never begin to advance until their property is rendered secure, until they enjoy the rights of man; and these they

will never obtain except by means of European conquest.' And again, 'The masses of the people [in Asia] are invariably slaves. The conquest of Asia by European powers is therefore in reality Emancipation, and is the first step towards the establishment of oriental nationality.'

Edward Dicey, whom we have already met as a liberal exponent of imperialism, added his meed of tribute to the imminent deity. In three articles written in quick succession for the *Nineteenth Century* in 1877,[1] he advocated British occupation of Egypt to secure the possession of India. He interpreted the empire as a necessary fulfilment of national destiny. And, out-torying some of the tories themselves, he rejected entirely the theory that the privilege of empire could be justified only by the benefits which it conferred, directly or indirectly, on subject peoples.

It must be remembered that we have yet not entered the imperial age proper. These people, from Ruskin to Winwood Reade, were not of this age: they heralded it. They laid its intellectual foundations, ploughed the national consciousness and prepared it for the imperial seed. They were like the wind which herds the clouds together so that they may pour water. They were the harbingers, the precursors, of momentous things.

With Cecil Rhodes we for the time being part company with the theoreticians and survey the coming of imperialism in the august company of those who helped in its birth. This is a study of the imperial mind, not of imperial action. So we will leave alone Rhodes' African adventures and annexations and mention only one significant development of his mind. In his first will made on 19 September 1877 he bequeathed his fortune, which was still to be made (one marvels at the confidence engendered by imperial sentiment), to 'the establishment, promotion and development of a Secret Society the aim and object whereof shall be the extension of British rule throughout the world'. Throughout the world ! indeed. He envisaged the occupation by British settlers of the entire continent of Africa, the Holy Land, the valley of Euphrates, the islands of Cyprus and Canada, the whole of South America, the islands of South Pacific not heretofore possessed by Great Britain, the whole of the Malaya Archipelago, the seaboard of China and Japan, the ultimate recovery of the United States of America as an integral part of the British Empire! Imagination boggles at the contemplation of such vast schemes, and the immediate reaction

1. See his "Our Route to India", *The Nineteenth Century*, June 1877, pp. 665-685; "The Future of Egypt", *ibid.*, August 1877, pp. 3-14; and "Mr. Gladstone and Our Empire", *ibid.*, September 1877, pp. 292-308.

is to look at them as the vapourings of an unhinged mind and to pass on, until we recall that at its zenith the British empire came quite close to the dimensions prescribed in the will. Rhodes must have written this testament with

> The echoes of the past within his brain
> The sunrise of the future on his face.

A popular impression has grown that Gladstone was an anti-imperialist simply because he was a life-long political foe of Disraeli who ushered in the imperial era. But British party politics does not move in such clear-cut grooves, nor does it have its being in that implacable logic which philosophers have often preached without practising. Anyway, it is a hard fact that many more chambers were added to the stately mansion of empire under the liberal 'anti-imperialist' Gladstone than under the irrepressible, high imperialist Disraeli. History goes on teaching us that facts are more powerful than theories; but man would rather not have the truth.

Gladstone's puritan turn of mind made him add a religious dimension to imperialism. Christians were infallible and above reproach. As far as the Eastern Question was concerned, he believed in atrocities committed by the Muslims alone. In 1876 the Bulgarians were the guileless victims and the Turks the despicable murderers. In 1897 the Armenians were the innocent party and the Turks once again the unmentionable orientals. His pamphlet, *The Bulgarian Horror and the Question of the East*, written at top speed in high passion, sold two hundred thousand copies in three weeks. Though Disraeli, in a biting phrase, dismissed the Gladstonian effusion by saying that Gladstone was a greater horror than the pamphlet, the fact is that such immense sale reflects the popularity of Gladstone's emphasis on the Christian element of imperialism of which his anti-Turkish feeling was a part and a manifestation. On the Turkish race his judgment was without reservation, ambiguity or charity: they were 'the one great anti-human specimen of humanity'.[1] However, he did not pursue his Christian imperialism to any logical conclusion and left it to others to try to take the Kingdom of Heaven by storm.

It is also significant that in his Midlothian campaign of 1879-80 Gladstone made few references to the colonies, and he no longer implied that their separation was inevitable or that it was to be encouraged. He was learning to live with imperialism with good grace.

1. Quoted in Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh, 1966), p. 378, whose citation of source is, however, not clear.

Gladstone was pushed into the arms of imperialism by the triumph of fact over theory, and, as a competent politician, he had accepted the result and, however reluctantly, welcomed the empire. Disraeli, a man of a very different stamp, created the theory, commanded facts to occur, fused the two, called it imperialism, and made himself its armed prophet. By firing salvo after salvo in salute to his own creation he developed a system, and then trained the nation to accept it with a devotion which must have surprised even himself. The ground had been levelled and furrowed by those who came before him. It was his destiny to sow the seed, to water the tender plant, and to see it come to the bud; and he revelled in it.

Power was dear to Disraeli's heart, but so was it to the hearts of all imperialists. Where Disraeli went further was in emphasizing the importance of display of power—display not only in the political but also in the theatrical sense. Power came from the possession of the empire, and the fact of the existence of the empire must be publicized, even a little exaggerated for embroidering the tale and heightening the effect, and communicated not only to the English people themselves who were not fully aware of it but also to the foreigners so that they recognize the majesty of British greatness and are duly impressed. Pomp and circumstance were necessary to this purpose. However distasteful this might be to some of his own party, not to speak of his political opponents, there was no running away from the fact that the empire needed, and eminently deserved, a romantic approach. Some might say that when he talked of the empire he was carried away by the enthusiasm of his own words, but he lifted the concept of empire from the level of a sordid business enterprise to that of a story-book feat of daring and imagination. It was a magnificent structure which only a great people could have reared and only a great people could maintain and enlarge. Even those who considered Disraeli's speeches a little too meretricious recognized the mastery of the idea behind them. He made the idea of imperialism not only popular but also highly respectable. Britain was not fighting on the north-western borders of India for the sake of a few miles of arid rock. What was at stake was the position of England in Asia and her ability and will to stand up to Russian advance and so prove to the millions of Asians and others that the hands which had created the empire were still strong and untouched by age. The uncharitable among his contemporaries taunted him that by the Royal Titles Act he had 'changed the sign of the Queen's Inn to Empress Hotel Ltd.', but they ignored the deep impression which this gesture

created in the simple minds of the common folk in England. The empire was no longer an external factor to be considered when high policy was on the anvil. Disraeli made it a part of British politics, a part of the life of every English citizen.

His detractors may go on thinking that by introducing romance he did something un-English. The British are, by temperament, an unromantic people (it is a wonder how they managed to write so much excellent poetry!), or at least that is the mask they choose to wear. Their heart may be deeply stirred, but woe to the Englishman who shows it. Emotions must be kept in check. Feelings must not betray. To give oneself away in human relations, particularly in public, is ungentlemanly and humiliating. The Anglo-Indians practised this to perfection and isolated themselves behind the bungalow walls, shut out the India of their labours, and then had the temerity to complain that it was not easy to make friends in India. Apply this attitude to imperialism and Disraeli's critics stand naked before us. Imperialism was a thing of grand design, of much profit, of considerable advantage to the nation, of great satisfaction and much joy. But one should not talk of these things; if talk you must, it is to be in whispers. One should not be seen to enjoy himself even in such an impersonal and vicarious pleasure as imperialism proffered. Disraeli brushed aside these maidenly taboos, tore off this mask of reserve (some would call it hypocrisy), and asked his people to look around, to enjoy the sight of the vast empire which was theirs, and to revel in their good luck. This was an unpardonable sin in an Englishman. In a prime minister it was criminal. So he was called a fop (which he was), a Jew (which by then he was not), an actor (which every politician has to be), and so on. The English loved him for being an imperialist and scowled at him for confessing his faith in public.

But Disraeli had done his work well. He had ushered in the imperial age with a flourish of trumpets and spoken the prologue in rolling phrases. Imperialism was now taken under its wing by one of the great political parties and thus officially honoured. Of course there was an element of jingoism in his imperial policy, particularly in new experiments on India's north-western frontier and in some of his foreign policy decisions. But jingoism appealed to many hearts and helped the imperial cause to grow. Some, like Seeley, gave the ugly name (ugly both in sound and in substance) of Bombasticism to the enjoyment of the spectacular and romantic aspects of empire and arraigned Disraeli before the Cambridge gownsmen. He did not deny this, but pointed

out that consciousness of power was impossible without consciousness of the external symbols of power. If this was heresy he was prepared to stand up and be counted among the infidel.

Sir John Seeley was not a creator of imperial thought but a populariser of great ability and originality. Few books inspired by the imperialist movement enjoyed, in their own day, the prestige and success of his *The Expansion of England* (1883). The immediate influence of the book was remarkable.[1] It took the reading public by storm, and sold eighty thousand copies in two years. The foundation of the Imperial Federation League by William E. Forster in 1884 was largely the result of this book. When Rosebery offered him a knighthood he made it clear that the honour was being bestowed for the imperial strain of his writings. Appropriately he was made a K. C. M. G., for the Order of St. Michael and George was an order of the Empire.

*The Expansion of England* arose out of his lectures delivered as the Regius Professor of History at Cambridge. As a lecturer, it is reported, he was brilliant and dogmatic. His students 'left the lecture-room feeling that though other departments of knowledge might be affected by the process of the suns, the conclusions of the Regius Professor of History were established upon adamantine foundations.'[2] He was generous in the use of the first person singular. The opening words of the first lecture of the book confirms this impression : 'It is a favourite maxim of mine . . . '. Such pharses as 'I think', 'according to me', 'in my opinion', abounded in his lectures and are scattered throughout the book. It does not necessarily show an egotistical mind, but it does mean that what he said was a personal interpretation of the empire — which is more or less true of every historian who thinks for himself.

About the empire in general Seeley made a logical and lucid statement of the case for retaining the colonies. On India he was truly imperial in approach and very perceptive about the course of her recent history. In a ruthless riposte to Macaulay and his arrogance about Western superiority over everything oriental, Seeley reminded his audience that they could not astonish the Indians by presenting to them ideas which they had never thought of. Indians were not barbarians. He denied that India was conquered by British troops. It was con-

1. Another work of the same class as *The Expansion of England* was F. S. Oliver's *Alexander Hamilton* (1904). It gave impetus to the foundation of the *Round Table* quarterly which aimed at studying imperial politics and advocating Imperial Federation. See D. C. Somervelle, *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Methuen, London, 6th. ed. 1950), p. 185.
2. Robert H. Murray, *Studies in English Social and Political Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1929), Vol. II, p. 196.

quered for the British by an army which was four-fifths Indian. Success had met the British arms not because of race but of better discipline and military superiority. Two other factors had facilitated British control over India. First, India was a mere geographical expression, not a political unit. In place of a national feeling, there were in India a number of mutually hostile states differing in race, language and religion. Secondly, British conquest was not so much a foreign conquest as a replacement of one set of foreign rulers by another. Though an imperialist by conviction, Seeley was not enamoured of the Indian empire. In his opinion 'it could fairly be questioned whether the possession of India does or even can increase our power or security, while there is no doubt that it vastly increases our dangers and responsibilities'. It was 'perhaps not absolutely the glorious thing we like to imagine it'. It was to be feared that it did India harm as well as good. But there was a great positive value in 'something like the *immensa majestas Romanae pacis* established among 250 millions of human beings'. In any case he was not prepared to reverse the tide of events and walk out of India. A withdrawal would be 'the most inexcusable of all conceivable crimes and might possibly cause the most stupendous of all conceivable calamities'. What made the retention of India possible? Well, the tacit consent and even the assistance of the native. As long as this tacit consent was given there was no reason for abandoning the country. What lay behind this consent was India's complete lack of national unity. And 'if by any process the population should be welded together into a single nationality, if our relation to it should come to resemble even distantly the relation of Austria to Italy then I do not say we ought to begin to fear for our dominion, I say we ought to cease at once to hope for it'.

Two notes in Seeley—one a strength, another a weakness—deserve attention. His humility was very untypical of the average imperial mind. He counteracted the 'bombastic' school of imperialism by demonstrating that colonial expansion was not due to the heroic qualities and superhuman statesmanship of the English, but to the accident of England's geographical position and sheer good luck. 'The English as such are perhaps not a race of Hellenic intelligence'. In spite of the strategic 'perhaps', such humility is tellingly refreshing when set along the arrogant bearing of his contemporaries.

The weakness lay in the implications of the very title of the book. It gave currency to the false idea that the growth of the empire into the colonies of settlement was the 'expansion of England'. He implied that

the new communities overseas were but 'scattered fragments of a single race'. Morley saw the danger of this implication in a review he wrote of the book in 1884. Morley's view, and that of the Liberals in general and of the Manchester School, was that the unity of the empire lay in community of interest, while Seeley was sure that it lay in community of race and religion. Of the two, Morley's analysis was in the long run more true, but Seeley's was more pure, more deeply rooted in the Victorian environment and more imperial in accent.

Cromer was in the line of Seeley but with a slightly different emphasis. He liked neither Islam nor Egyptian nationalism. His rule was indirect, but he left no doubt that he preferred what he called Christian and civilized instruments of exercising imperial power. For him it was the Englishman's duty to save Egypt from the Egyptians but for the Egyptians, and only he could do this. Though magnanimity is not among the qualities of *Modern Egypt*, yet its contents won superlative applause from such 'Arabs' as Gertrude Bell, who wrote, 'how far beyond all praise, like turning over the pages of the Recording Angel—though we have no reason to believe his phrases will be as felicitous as yours'. What particularly drew her attention was his argument that through his methods the Asiatics could be ruled in a manner consistent with British institutions and opinions.[1]

But the Whig that was in Cromer did not let him become the true-hearted imperialist that perhaps he wanted to be. He did not give up the hope that eventually self-government was to be the end of British rule. In the meantime the administrator was right in singing the praises of good government and congratulating himself for bringing it to the Asiatics. But even the application of the principle of ultimate self-government was selective. In India, for example, her lack of homogeneity was so obvious and complete that independence could not be visualized as the final aim. At most India would get local government under remote British control. He did not rule out all reforms for India, but these have to be based on the central principle of the 'steadfast maintenance' of British supremacy.

To pass from Cromer to Curzon is to have all one's doubts removed by a strong mind of superior righteousness and crisp and sure judgment. Cromer's book on Egypt betrays his uneasiness, however transitory and slight, about an inner feeling that he was doing in Egypt in his own way what Arabi himself would have wished to do. For an imperialist to

1. Gertrude Bell to Lord Cromer, 8 March 1908, quoted in Norman Daniel, *op. cit.*, p. 471.

imagine that the natives correctly know what is to be done is to part with his confidence in his own exclusive right to know what is good for the backward races. Such uncertainties dared not approach Curzon's ego. His self-confidence was impregnable. His belief in his ability to think and do exactly the right thing was incorrigible. His faith in the mission of his life, as in that of his nation, was untarnished. He was the good knight cased in the shining armour of virtue and dedicated to the eradication of evil. He was an autocrat of the finest order—intolerant of opposition, impatient of delay, unforgiving of inefficiency, unreconciled to criticism, unaccustomed to refusal. He worked harder than any other viceroy of India and also made himself more unpopular (amongst the Hindu majority) than any other. He enacted laws which his subjects, in their ignorance, did not appreciate, and solved problems which his predecessors, in their lethargy, had not tackled. He made his subordinates work at twice the speed they were used to, partly by the whip of his tongue and his pen, and partly by his own example.

To quote the legends of his Balliol days to damn him is bad history. To believe everything that the frustrated Hindus said or wrote about him is to judge a man by the word of his enemies. To see in his self-confidence the unmistakable signs of nothing beyond an inflated ego is to take the symbol for the substance. To mark him as an obstacle on India's road to self-government is to condemn him for failing to do something which he was not sent out to do. To say, as has often been said, that he was an enemy of the Indian people is not only a libel but a lie. Alone among all the Indian pro-consuls he stood by against racial discrimination and punished a British regiment for mistreating an Indian—a strange proceeding to come from a man who is commonly believed to have been an unfeeling imperial automaton. He saluted the pre-British Indian history by ordering, by statute, the care, protection and maintenance of historical monuments—a step which had not even been suggested by those raving Indian 'nationalists' who measured their patriotism by the hatred they nursed of him.

Of course, he was not a god, in spite of the powers he wielded. He made many mistakes and thereby proved that he was human. Some of them were silly, like calling Indians liars by tradition and habit. Some were careless, like holding the imperial durbar at much expense to the Indian exchequer. But those who accuse him of deliberate malice in his Indian career will be very hard put to produce adequate evidence. He divided Bengal on purely administrative grounds and, in spite of all the Hindu rage and fury, today seventy years after the

event no facts have been produced to prove the contrary. If the use of hindsight is permissible here, one has only to point to what happened in 1947 when the same Hindus of the same province demanded and received a partition of the same 'homeland' on virtually the same frontiers as Curzon had drawn – and this time the split was not between two administrative areas of a centrally-ruled empire but between two parts of two sovereign states.[1]

Nor can Curzon be singled out for punishment because he did not consider the Indians the equals of the ruling race. This superiority is the *raison d'etre* of imperialism, and he sinned in the excellent company of all his predecessors and successors. But his love for India was undeniable and can be illustrated from several sources including, above all, his own confessions. Throughout his stay in India his belief in the duty of the Englishman to be a power for good rested unshaken. At a government house dinner in Lahore, the wife of one of the Punjab judges told Curzon that her son could not make up his mind whether to try for the Home Civil Service or the Indian Civil Service. On her request for advice the Viceroy came out emphatically for the Indian Civil Service (and this is the significant part of his reply) 'believing that in India whatever good a man had in himself must sooner or later show itself, whereas at home it may for ever lie buried in office drawers and paper baskets. Moreover, since we do not know why we exist and what becomes of us, the only reason of existence must be to do good, and where can that better be done than in India?'[2]

In spite of his reputation (or rather notoriety) as an inflexible autocrat, there is little doubt that he was not only conscious of the existence and growth of a public opinion in India but respected it and on several occasions sought to prove that it should be accorded priority over public opinion at home. One example of this is the tenacity with which he fought the question of payment for the Indian delegation to the King's coronation in London. His championship of the Indian interest became, in fact, so frequent and assiduous that Sir Arthur Godley complained from the India Office that the Viceroy seemed to be too unduly concerned with the Indian agitation against the policies and decisions of the Home government. He found it hard to understand 'why what is called public opinion in India should have any more

1. For a longer and documented treatment of the 1905 partition of Bengal and of Curzon's role in it see my *Britain and Muslim India* (London, 1963), chapters 3 and 4.
2. The anecdote is told by Sir Malcolm Darling in his latest volume of personal impressions of India, *Apprentice to Power: India 1904-1908* (London, 1966), p. 34.

overwhelming weight either with Your Excellency's Government or with the Secretary of State than it had ten or fifteen years ago'. Curzon's reply to Godley is an eye-opener to the students of his career and merits substantial quotation:

'To you in England it seems so clear that there is no difference between the end of Lord Dufferin's regime and the end of mine. To me in India it is transparent that there is all the difference in the world. What is the great difference at this end? It is that public opinion has been growing all the while, is articulate, is daily becoming more powerful, cannot be ignored. What is the origin of mistakes sometimes made at the other end? It is that men are standing still with their eyes shut and do not see the movement here . . . to contend that it [public opinion] does not exist, that it has not advanced in the last fifteen years, or that it may be treated with general indifference is, in my view, to ignore the great change which is passing over this country, and which I believe history will recognize myself as having done much (whether wisely or unwisely) to accelerate; *viz.*, the lifting of India from the level of a Dependency to the position which is bound one day to be hers, if it is not so already, namely that of the greatest partner in the Empire.'[1]

An even better statement of his belief in the Englishman's duty in India is to be found in the pageantry of distinguished phrases of his last Indian address. When he stood for the last time on the shores of India, ready to say good-bye to a country which had in turns excited and frustrated him, flattered and abused him; where he had had his first and last taste of unlimited power over men and things; where he had worked till late into the morning hours, pouring on files and papers, writing memoranda which only his pen could lift to the level of literature, trying to forget the agony in his back; where he stood alone amid the waters of official acquiescence and Hindu hostility—what thoughts and memories must have returned on the wheel of time, some happy, some joyful, others dreary and teasing. Who knows what passed in his mind at this moment of farewell to his dark empire? But we know what fell from his lips on the occasion, and whatever one may think of his official career no man whose heart is moved by the sifted purity of English prose can forget the epilogue he spoke to his own drama in India:

'A hundred times in India have I said to myself, Oh that to every Englishman in this country, as he ends his work, might be truthfully

1. Curzon to Sir Arthur Godley, 27 January 1904, quoted in Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon* (London, 1928), Vol. II, pp. 327-328.

applied the phrase "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity". No man has, I believe, ever served India faithfully of whom that could not be said. All other triumphs are tinsel and sham. Perhaps there are few of us who make anything but a poor approximation to that ideal. But let it be our ideal all the same—to fight for the right, to abhor the imperfect, the unjust or the mean, to swerve neither to the right hand, nor to the left, to care nothing for flattery or applause or odium or abuse—it is so easy to have any of them in India—never to let your enthusiasm be soured or your courage grow dim, but to remember that the Almighty has placed your hand on the greatest of his ploughs, in whose furrow the nations of the future are germinating and taking shape, to drive the blade a little forward in your time, and to feel that somewhere among these millions you have left a little justice or happiness or prosperity, a sense of manliness or moral dignity, a spring of patriotism, a dawn of intellectual enlightenment or a stirring of duty where it did not exist before—that is enough, that is the Englishman's justification in India. It is good enough for his watchword while he is here, for his epitaph when he is gone. I have worked for no other aim. Let India be my judge.'[1]

Common sense quails before calling this hypocrisy.

Curzon's faith in the superiority of his race was unquestioned. But this faith does not necessarily carry with it an expression of contempt for others. It is open to serious doubt if Curzon, in spite of all his *hauteur*, would have deemed it possible or even prudent to say what Milner said in his address of 18 May 1903 to the municipal congress of Johannesberg. 'The white man must rule, because he is elevated by many, many steps above the black man; steps which it will take the latter centuries to climb, and which it is quite possible that the vast bulk of the black population may never be able to climb at all....One of the strongest arguments why the white man must rule is because that is the only possible means of gradually raising the black man, not to our level of civilization—which it is doubtful whether he would ever attain—but up to a much higher level than that which he at present occupies.'[2]

It is a long jump from these Victorians of the imperial heyday to Gilbert Murray (died 1957), the Oxford don and Greek scholar. One of his students, Sir Charles Bowra, himself a distinguished classical scholar, recalls that in the 1920s and 1930s Murray 'had in him a strain

1. *Ibid.*, p. 424.
2. *The Milner Papers* (ed. by Headlam, London, 1931-33), Vol. II, pp. 467-468.

of the Victorian imperialist, who thought that it was sometimes permissible for a "higher" civilization to impose itself on a "lower".'[1] Who can say that the imperial idea was short of staying power, or that its appeal gradually diminished for the finest of English minds?

* * * *

The Englishman's love for sport has often been used to explain much in his behaviour and character. Santayana, the Spanish savant, once said that the two-party system was ingrained in British life because the Englishman preferred to view political conflict as a contest between two teams of players. Would it be too fanciful to relate the popular adulation of pro-consuls to the English game mystique? The ordinary Englishman may have looked at the maker of empire and imperial administrator as the captain of, say, a cricket eleven going out to the West Indies or South Africa to try to win the rubber. The pro-consuls were even more important than captains for they won empires or kept them in good trim. They were like god-like athletes whose performance is applauded, shouted from the house-tops and woven into the history or legend of national achievements. People who scanned their newspapers every morning for telegrams from Afghanistan or East Africa and then set out to seek friends to talk about the fresh news were not very different from the shouting, shrieking, clapping crowds at Wembley or the Lords. Every advance in Africa was another ball gone into the other side's goal-post; the news of the fall of an Indian province was another century on the national score-board (though some centuries were made against disappointingly soft bowling). Sometimes the supporters of the two opposing teams shouted at each other with so much voice and warmth as if there were two nations in the land; and this had its imperial counterpart in such division of opinion as manifested itself during the Boer War or, to a much smaller degree, during the Suez crisis. In particular, the Englishman's running fight with the Pathans on the north-west frontier of India was more of a game than a battle. The rules were known to all and scrupulously observed. There was respect and esteem on both sides—an inherent sense of equality—which no English soldier or administrator would have imagined to be possible in other parts of India. This was a game in the real sense, practised as much to keep the frontier stable as to keep the soldiers on the alert.

1. C. M. Bowra, *Memories, 1898-1939* (London, 1966), p. 225. A year before his death Murray 'gave modified support to Sir Anthony Eden in his Suez adventure', *Ibid.*

The enormous authority granted to the pro-consul recalls another feature of English sports life—the sovereignty of the captain on the field. Both were men on the spot and knew best what to do. Faced with an enemy or a problem, there was no time to go back to the board of governors and ask for instructions. The instructions were already there graven in granite: try to win. The captain on the field and the pro-consul in the African bush or the Sindhi desert were in the same situation. Their goals were marked out. They had their teams to help them. There was no time to fumble or look over the shoulder. Their decision-making power was supreme, and was questioned neither by the team nor by those who had sent them there. And this showed up another parallel between sports and imperialism. Just as the captain proved his capacity by keeping his team together so that eleven men moved as one, so the pro-consul rose or fell by the co-ordinated work he could get out of his men. English success at games was as much due to efficient team work as the making of empire was the result of co-operation between the soldier and the civilian. And in both contests it was the captain and the pro-consul who received the acclaim and wrote his name on the parchment of history. In this fashion was the superiority of the imperial mind acknowledged and perpetuated in national tradition.

It is significant that soldiers, however pre-eminent in their profession, rarely enter the scroll of the great. Robert of Kandhar was not an imperial mind, but an imperial instrument. Napier of Sind did not think imperial thoughts, he planned the strategy of imperial advance - quite a different exercise. The imperial minds were thinkers who contemplated the empire as Greek philosophers had contemplated the truth. They were all men of distinction and of broad intellect. They were administrators, lawgivers, policy makers, ministers of state and writers of books. They were creators of ideas as well as practitioners of the art of administration. Many of them were ennobled for their imperial service and British aristocracy was rejuvenated at a time when hereditary nobility of Europe was dying out for want of new blood.

* * *

It is an interesting feature of English political life that no special machinery was devised to prepare or train the imperial mind. The Haileybury College was not a seminary of potential imperialists but simply a training ground for future administrators. If any conscious effort can be said to have been made to take a few brilliant youths in

hand, to lick them into shape and to make them think imperially, it was made by Jowett at Balliol College, Oxford.

Jowett was a remarkable man. Born in 1817, he attended St. Paul's School for seven years as a day scholar, then won an open scholarship at Balliol, and was elected a fellow of his college while still an undergraduate. At twenty-five he was appointed a tutor and that he remained until his famous Mastership began in 1870. He died in harness in 1893. He was the first man in Oxford, probably in England, to master the obstruse Hegelian system of philosophy. But he did not shut himself up in an ivory tower to speculate on recondite philosophical questions. In applying the lessons of philosophy to society and state he had something of Plato in him. It was this tendency which made the Balliol of his day the centre of young imperial thinking.

Under his inspiration Balliol began to train and produce a large number of public servants who later distinguished themselves in public life. As his influence increased in the College and outside, the role of Balliol in national life expanded. It was by no means a coincidence that Balliol started its career as a nursery of public men at a time when imperialism was just beginning to cast its spell over the country In his time Balliol sent into the world imperial pro-consuls of the stamp of Milner and Curzon, statesmen of the position of Asquith and Grey, church dignitaries of the standing of Gore and Lang, historians of the distinction of Tout, philosophers of the quality of Caird, and poets of the order of Swinburne. For the Indian empire alone it had by the end of the nineteenth century produced one-sixth of the entire Indian Civil Service and three successive viceroys.

This was by any standard an outstanding achievement. But it did not come through the ordinary methods of encouraging cramming—not unknown even in Oxford. Jowett's method was different. It was to make a religion out of hard work, and to offer his own example to his pupils. Thus by precept and counsel he persuaded them to set their sights high and then strive to attain the desired goal. The advice he gave to one of his youngsters, who was rich and naturally an idler, was expressive of the man. 'You are a fool', he told him. 'You must be sick of idling It is too late for you to do much. But the class matters nothing. What does matter is *the sense of power* which comes from steady working.'[1]

1. Geoffrey Faber, *Jowett : A Portrait with Background* (London, 1957), p. 359. This is not a biography in the conventional sense but makes the Master come alive. The italics are mine.

These words—the sense of power—tell us much about Jowett, his Balliol, his students and his methods. Jowett was a philosopher and, in spite of his headship of a college, not an administrator or a public man. Power for him did not mean political authority or public ascendancy. It meant power over oneself, the capacity to command one's soul, the strength to keep one's emotions and tendencies in complete control, to rule over oneself and to let no other dominate your intellect or spirit. This was the real thing. This was where the philosopher met the prophet and the two taught the human soul to call none master and to go its own way, with an eye which would distinguish vice from virtue, a head which would choose virtue every time, and a heart which would hold by the choice without fear or favour.

Given the age in which Jowett practised this art of moulding the young who found their way to Balliol, it was inevitable that power over oneself became a means of exercising power over others. By basing the latter variety of power on character the Balliol men were doing nothing more than what the Master himself had done. Haunted with a dread of failure, with no ready-made advantage in life, Jowett had, by ceaseless work, iron self-control and sheer character, made himself what he was. His pupils would be idiots not to emulate him. When you have character and go out into the world, unless there is something seriously wrong with the world, you are bound to occupy positions of influence and authority. In the imperial age these positions were as often as not to be found in the empire.

The possession of character entitled one to high office. It also made the exercise of power a moral, or at least not an amoral, function. In thus founding political power (which here included imperial power) on a moral basis we see imperialism linking its arms with Idealism. Idealism stood for the play of the general will in politics: the generally accepted opinions and ideas of society should mould public life, and this was enough of a moral sanction of political power. As imperialism was by now a settled conviction in England, to exercise power in its name was a sufficient reason in itself. The popularity of Idealism in the Oxford of those days might or might not have been the original cause of Jowett's line of thinking, but it certainly brought valuable support to what he was teaching his youngmen to be. Both Idealism and imperialism paid their respects to the product of history, to the institutions of the state, to a political system which brought satisfaction to the ordinary, human, acquisitive instincts for wealth and power and at the same time transformed these instincts

into an instrument of peace and beneficence. A very good example of a man taking his metaphysics from Idealism and his politics from imperialism and fusing the two to produce liberal imperialism was Haldane. Lionel Curtis was another to be deeply affected by the Idealist Oxford and the Imperialist Balliol, and he passed on their teachings to the Round Table group and ultimately to the journal of that name. Milner was a typical product of Jowett's Balliol, and he it was who trained in South Africa a number of people who later ruled over different parts of the empire or laid down the rules of the imperial game from London. This group—Milner's Kindergarten as it was called—contained names like Hugh Wyndham, Robert Brand, Philip Kerr, Lionel Curtis, Geoffrey Dawson and Leo Amery. Later Sir Reginald Coupland and Sir Edward Grigg joined in. It was thus that the teachings of Jowett passed current by the hands of the faithful long after the Master had gone to his rest.

But it would be a mistake to exaggerate the role of Jowett in the shaping of the imperial mind. He did a great deal and of course his influence was wide and deep. Several of his ideas were seminal and wrought powerfully on important people and institutions. The debt of imperialism to his genius is not inconsiderable and must be acknowledged. But to go further than this and claim that the English imperial mind was made in his image is to mistake a part for the whole. As we have seen in previous chapters, so many and such diverse factors were at work that it would be exceedingly imprudent to point to any single individual or theory or occurrence and make it the sole or even the predominant factor in the making of that magnificent, confusing, exciting and exasperating thing—the imperial mind.

## CHAPTER 5

# The Imperial Imagination

English literature is one of the glories of the world, and one would have thought that inspired by the imperial imagination English literary tradition would blossom forth into a vivid and enduring literature of the empire. Undoubtedly there was much in the mood of the Victorian age that held such promise.

The Victorians were confident of themselves, and few things are more conducive to fine literary effort than this. They had unbounded energy, both of body and mind, and were glad to put it into words. There is a masculine strength, a feeling of solid substance, in what they wrote. In the beginning some of them were disconcerted by the conflict between science and long-held religious and moral views. But soon the creative mind surmounted the confusion and rested in peace with itself. Though in conflict, too, it had produced some outstanding literature like Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, which at times gives an impression of greater humanity and dignity than his later poems could claim. Above all the Victorians saw the world aglow with emotion, hope and cheerful prospect. They were not introverts peering into themselves in utter forgetfulness of what their eyes saw in the outer world. Their minds were open to receive all kinds of impressions which their imagination transfigured into artistic vision. They found much to inspire their humour, much to draw out their eloquence, much to bring out their power of realistic portrayal. Even their pathos has a delicate lining to itself.

Perhaps the unique distinction of the Victorians was complete un-self-consciousness, for which they should have been grateful

to imperialism. One is self-conscious when one is faced with a difficult choice of values and knows that the public eye is on him to see if he makes the right choice. When he is sure that what he chooses is bound to be the right thing he is no longer self-conscious. In this sense, self-consciousness is a result of weakness. The Victorians were saved from this infirmity of mind and feeling by imperialism. The possession of empire (and the consciousness of it) brought them so much certainty that it did not behove them to darken their life with any doubt about the rightness of their choice. How imperialism makes men of us all! This certitude amounted to self-righteousness and whatever one did in those palmy days had to be right. So there was no question of being self-conscious. This had a heartening effect on literature.

At once a whole new field fell open to experience and exploration. A fresh range of topics offered itself as subject-matter of literature. The gamut of literary technique was widened to include new forms and usages. New notes were added to the scale, thus making for sweeter harmony. More strings were added to the lyre to make more dulcet music. Things which their predecessors, cribbed and confined by the rationalism of the eighteenth century, had found beyond their ken were now made welcome and used with gay abandon. Emotion and sentiment, pooh-poohed by their elders, were entertained without shame or embarrassment. Life was depicted in more natural, more soothing, more humanly colours. The poet admitted that certain feelings and scenes uplifted his heart and impelled him to write. The novelist acknowledged that a mother crying for the loss of her child brought tears to his own eyes. The essayist recorded the lump in his throat on seeing the young man confessing his love before his maiden. In short, sentiment was no longer dismissed with rude contempt as beneath the artist's dignity. Such is life and as such it must be painted. To change the hues to reflect the sullens of one's own mind is to corrupt what God created with His own pure hands. The Victorians had what Lord David Cecil once called a full-blooded temperament, free from emotional squeamishness and the snobbish nervousness of being thought sentimental.

With this freer vision of life there emerged a flowering of the spirit which came flooding in with the tide and inundated the literary scene. In this plenitude of imagination a host of first class creative writers appeared to enrich national literature. But, alas, the literary possibilities of the empire were never fully discovered. Some popular

writers answered the call of the vast open spaces over which their nation held the sway. Some novels were made out of the romance of the empire. A few verses, all without any real poetic merit, were written. But, with the single towering exception of Kipling, the empire drew no singer to celebrate its praises and no story-teller to immortalise its peoples and places.

English literature has been rich in political writings of all sorts: pamphlets, party polemics, autobiographies, journals, reminiscences, biographies of kings and statesmen, chronicles of war and peace, policy statements, social and economic debates, and other more peripheral jottings. Journalism has made its contribution to this field, and some of it has the quality and staying power of literature. It is strange, therefore, that in this age of prolificity the imperial imagination rested unstirred. The empire inspired new philosophies of mind (the white man's burden), new theories of economics (free trade *versus* protection), new methods of administration (the direct *versus* indirect rule), new social doctrines (racial superiority), new historical values (the expanding frontier), new humanitarianism (the uplifting of the black races), new religion (the gospel of progress and civilization), even new dreams (Rhodes and his empire of the world). How singular that the empire, which was itself a product of imagination, failed to inspire literature which is the most imaginative of all human activity. The empire never made its pilgrimage to Parnassus and reasons must be found for this.[1]

One general condition which goes a long way in explaining this want may be mentioned right away. The empire could have been a magnet for satirical writing, but English literature and journalism are poor in political satire. In this *genre* only Swift is noticeable, and today perhaps Malcolm Muggeridge, neither of whom thought it worth his while to exercise his art on this imperial concept. In a way the empire, as a literary inspiration, fell between two stools. It was taken too seriously to be made a fit subject for humour or wit and considered too slight to attract satire. Thus two treatments which could have made 'colonial' literature vivid, lively and readable were denied to it.

A more serious inhibition was the fundamentally political nature of the empire. From whatever angle one looked at it, and however

1. The inability of the British Empire to produce an imperial literature is indeed a strange phenomenon. As far as I know no serious inquiry has been made into this failure: a fruitful and exciting pursuit for anyone with interest, time and opportunity. Here I have only indicated some broad issues which are relevant to the narrative. The inadequacy of this treatment is acknowledged and no claim is made to a comprehensive analysis of the place of the empire in English literature.

much the average Englishman accepted imperialism as a part of his existence, the truth was that the empire, and everything that went with it, was politics; and literature is not politics. Many a writer of talent must have been revolted at the thought of writing on a political theme. Rightly or wrongly, the *literati* believed that the purity of literature should not be sullied by the political touch. Anyway, to write on the empire was to expose oneself unnecessarily to the charge of producing propaganda instead of literature. We know that this was one of the chief accusations brought against Kipling, and several of his contemporary and later-day critics were unable to see his art or vision as separate from his subject.[1] This treatment of Kipling taught a lesson to others of similar ambitions and kept them away from imperial themes. The empire could of course look after itself, but their own reputation needed constant care.

Literature is creation and all creation, be it in words, colour or stone, is above everything a matter of feeling. The heart (with or without the co-operation of the head) must sense a deep effect before the pen, the brush or the chisel registers and records the feeling. A journalist can work without sensibility, a creative artist never. Not only that, but we judge the artist and his work by the measure of his personal feeling and award praise or censure by finding out whether he is deeply involved in his subject or is merely recording a second-hand experience. Here English writers were defeated by nature. Few among them could visit a part of the empire and stay there long enough to get a personal feel which could make a poem or a novel. To hear other people talk about the empire was not at all enough. The reality must be experienced and felt along the soul to be transmuted into a work of art. Otherwise you produce journalism, perhaps high class journalism, but journalism all the same. Knowledge of empire was minimal among the commonality (enthusiasm is not knowledge); among the writers the ignorance was complete. Absorbed in their own work, living in an age of slender and difficult communications, reading or hearing of events in the empire as if something was happening in another world, and receiving impressions at second or third remove, they could be amused, sometimes excited, often interested, but never

1. A good illustration of this approach is Robert Buchanan's *The Voice of 'The Hooligan': A Discussion of Kiplingism* (New York, 1900). Even such a sympathetic and perceptive critic as Bonamy Dobree felt that he could not discuss Kipling without considering his imperial interests; see his *The Lamp and the Lute* (London, rev. ed. 1964), pp. 38-64, which was first published in 1929. For a still later attack see Boris Ford's "A Case for Kipling?" in the *Scrutiny* of 1942 (Vol. XI, No. 1).

made to feel the reality of empire so strongly as to inspire their muse.

But this inability did not hem in the Anglo-Indians and other people who spent their working lives in the empire. Did they produce a 'colonial' literature? The answer is no, but for different reasons. They were deeply affected by their devotion to the empire, by the mission they believed they were carrying out, and by the strange, interesting world which encompassed their colonial existence. The hearts of some were deeply stirred by what they saw and felt. They could have contributed to literature but for two things. First, creative writing was not their forte. Imagination takes many shapes and hues, and one can be an imaginative administrator without the capacity of putting his thoughts into the right words. It is absurd to reproach an eminent administrator for not being a poet. We should be thankful for what they were without pining for what they were not. In the second place, the empire was an exacting mistress. To arrive in a new, unfamiliar country without much prior knowledge; to learn the art of administration in a few months, not at a school, but at the hands of a senior colleague who may be indifferent to teaching and cynical about your absorbing power; to meet every day several people of different races and religions, to grade them by the fine imperial calculus of expediency, dignity, value and local conditions, and to cultivate each of them to a certain degree and to neither more nor less; to learn the history, literature and laws of the new land; to tour the countryside on horseback and try to understand the peasant's way of life and his needs and problems; to train oneself in paper work in the secretariat and learn the esoteric art of bureaucracy which was a world in itself; to try to pick up one or two local languages, again not at a school, but under the puzzled eyes of a *munshi* who could never understand the young civilian's enthusiasm or pronunciation; to write long reports and memoranda for the secretariat-walas who rarely read them but who generally promoted you on their strength; to write lengthy letters to your parents, wife or friends when the day's work was done and memories of home came with hurtful pain; to pay to the Anglo-Indian society its meed of tribute by spending an evening in the club to drink and talk with colleagues, to exchange gossip, to reminisce and hope and dream amongst men of one's own kin; to dine out in company and return the hospitality; to do a thousand little things which duty, interest or etiquette demanded and which gave wings to time—where amid all this was the leisure or the opportunity to cultivate the imagination? All energies and capacities were needed to do the day's grind and there was little time to relax and think. Several pro-consuls and colonial

administrators were men of great talent and, placed in a less demanding profession, might have written much and well. They had imagination, ability and a refined sensibility; but alas other things called them and thus many voices were muted who could have sung of the empire and its people and exalted imperialism to a vision which was at once profane and sacred.

* * * *

It is true that the administrator did not produce literature in the narrow, conventional sense of poetry, fiction, drama or essay, but he did write much that comes very near to literature and has enriched the English language. Therefore, before considering the place of imperialism in English literature and the few people who contributed to what has been most inelegantly called 'colonial literature', let us first turn to the works of the administrators, which perhaps have a better title to be called 'imperial literature'.

An outstanding quality of the empire, which unfortunately and inexplicably has not been fully acknowledged, was the intellectual achievements of the people who governed and administered it. Several of them became scholars and their writings were accepted by the professionals as work of high quality. Sir Stamford Raffles, the creator of Singapore, was an expert on the flora and fauna of Java and a part of his impressive Malayan and Javanese ethnographical collection is treasured by the British Museum. Sir Harry Johnstone, the 'prancing pro-consul', was a naturalist, and artist of refreshing sensibility, a novelist and a consummate African linguist.

Anglo-India produced more men of letters than the rest of the empire put together, and it has been their great and justifiable pride that much of the world's present-day knowledge of modern India derives from their work. Nothing of this kind or on this scale was done by any other imperialism ancient or modern.[1]

Naturally Indian history was the first to attract their interest. Some knowledge of the country's past was indispensable to an understanding of its people. This general curiosity soon deepened into a spirit of serious inquiry and the past was unearthed (literally at Mohanjo Daro and other archaeological sites), studied and chronicled. Vincent Smith wrote the first comprehensive account of ancient India and followed it up with a large study of Akbar and a general volume on the

1. Popular military history focussing on the empire made up a part of nineteenth century imperial writing. Fitchett, an Australian Wesleyan minister who died in 1928, is a good example of this. His *Deeds that Won the Empire Fights for the Flag* and *How England Saved Europe* reflect contemporary imperial feeling.

entire span of Indian history; the last-named became the Oxford History of India and many generations of students in India and England read it as a text. In the meantime, Cambridge, where the grand spirit of Acton was still ascendant, planned and produced, under Dodwell's hawk-eyed supervision, a six-volume history of India. Stately in appearance and substantial in content, several of its best contributors were Anglo-Indians. Sir William Wilson Hunter, a copious intellect, put the empire in his debt by planning and editing the imperial Gazetteer, which remains a towering landmark in imperial information gathering. To this he added some of his own studies on contemporary Indian Muslims and the history of British rule in India. Then there was Sir Alfred Lyall, a well-known administrator, a poet (of this more later) and an historian. His book on the British expansion in India and the two volumes on Asiatic Studies contain much little-known information for which later historians are grateful to him. When the time came for revising Smith's well-used Oxford history this task was entrusted to another Anglo-Indian (not an administrator, however), Percival Spear of Delhi and later of Cambridge, who later added the chapters on the period not covered by Smith.

The size and diversity of India made it imperative that histories of provinces and regions be written to bring depth to historical perspective. Here again the Anglo-Indians were pre-eminent, and there is nothing to compare with Trevaskis's two books on the Punjab and Sir Olaf Caroe's authoritative study of the Pathans. It is significant that the first volume of the history of Sind (a Pakistani enterprise) is written by Mr. Lambrick, a former civilian. In addition, the different races of India were also made subjects of study. James Grant Duff published his history of the Mahrattas in 1826, and J. D. Cunningham his history of the Sikhs in 1849. The latter still commands respect as a work of deep scholarship.

At least one Anglo-Indian broadened his interest and wrote, not on India herself, but on Islam. Sir William Muir, the governor of North-Western Provinces, made a name in the West with his biography of the Prophet and his study of the early Caliphate. Though many of his interpretations are unacceptable to a Muslim and some of his sources are questionable, the sweep of his knowledge and the hard work which went into the making of these books are impressive.

Though historiography is the work of professional historians (and here, too, as we have seen, the Anglo-Indians demanded serious notice), there is always a large body of miscellaneous writing which is the raw material of history and without which no historian can unfold his story

or analyse the events. Personal impressions, reminiscences, autobiographies, diaries, journals, letters, ephemeral jottings and official reports make up this vital fringe of historical knowledge. Anglo-Indian supremacy in this field is unchallenged. The administrators had a unique opportunity of observing the Indian scene. They met all kinds of people, they knew the official machinery from the inside, they were posted to different parts of the country which gained them an all-round view, they spoke some of the Indian languages, their official duties brought them in touch with the peasant, the city man, the native colleague or subordinate, the journalist, the politician, the parliamentarian, the good Indian and the bad—and from this variegated mosaic of impressions and experiences they could, if they would, produce a fascinating and revealing study of India and her peoples.

Luckily a great many of them have left one kind of record or another which serves two purposes. It gives an insight into the administrator's mind and his attitude to India. An instructive history of the Anglo-Indian mind (perhaps even philosophy) can be written from this source. Whoever writes it will have a pleasant task and should be able to produce an exciting account. Secondly, this record is a gold mine to be profitably worked by the historian. It contains so much information of incredible variety that to reconstruct the British period of Indian history without its help is an impossible task. Many things in it are not to the liking of Indians, but that is irrelevant.

The most striking part of this historical marginalia is made up of personal impressions as distinct from formal memoirs or autobiographies. It offers such a rich feast that it seems invidious to choose. Every reader and historian will go to the man who has more to give what he wants or who writes better prose. But some names must be mentioned to indicate the wealth and diversity of the material available. Only the most unreceptive mind will fail to be excited by such writers as Sir Malcolm Darling (the Punjab and its farmers) Sir Colin Garbett (tiger hunting among other things), A. A. Irvine (land of no regrets), Lady Rosamond Lawrence (mofussil life in north India), William Forbes-Mitchell (the Mutiny), Penderel Moon (always a stranger in India), Theodore Pennell (life on the Afghan frontier), Sir J. D. Rees (India real and modern), Sir John Strachey (India of the high and the low), and Ian Stephens (pleasure in the northern hills and journalism in war-time Calcutta).

Autobiographies unlock a different door into the same room. Few of them are bad-tempered or stuffy. More often the colour and vividness of India relieve the occasional gloom of homesickness. It is

an exciting adventure to enter India with the new civilian or subaltern, to travel with him from district to district or cantonment to cantonment, to accompany him on his country tours or his jaunts to the hills, to go with him from one part to the other until he is the *burha sahib* and lives in glory in the Government House with greying hair and thoughts of pension, and finally to shake his valedictory hand and leave him on the boat to England. What glories he had seen in his thirty years in India, what rare things he had experienced and treasured for the future, what heavy responsibilities he had carried and discharged which would have cracked his shoulders when he was yet fresh and unbroken, what a life it all had been, like a happy dream, like a vision of power and beauty and strength. He would never be the same again. In his own home, at the fireside, amid his own children, he would often think of India and of what he had made of her and of what she had made of him, the memory of happier days would return, and a gnawing at his heart would remind him that he had left a part of himself out there and that life would never be what it once had been.

As writing about oneself in the evening of life, especially when life had been lived out in the gorgeous East, gives much pleasure and long-forgotten joys and adventures can be re-experienced, Anglo-India is rich in this field of literature. There is in it much to please, instruct and inform. Naturally the man writes of his own *milieu*, the crowd he moved in, the places he saw, the profession he practised, and the impressions his individual mind received. As no man is exactly like another and human mind has infinite variety, every volume is a new insight into the India of a certain period and also into the mind of the writer. What he thinks of this brightest jewel in the imperial crown, what prejudices and assumptions he brings with him to this distant land, what he makes of the Indians whom he meets, how he looks at this immense empire with all its perils, beauties, problems and responsibilities, what the future may hold for this country and for the foreigners who rule it—all this and much besides comes out in the autobiographies. The reader is transported to a past whose lineaments stand so clear and sharp as if time had gone to sleep and men and events were moving before his very eyes. The plot slowly unfolds itself with the excitement of a well-constructed novel and the inevitability of a Greek play. Page follows page and we see the unfledged youth gradually maturing into the man of affairs who, after many a long delay, prepares to depart, laden with honours and worn with cares; and often the sorrow of parting sits on his brow like a shadow, and there he stands, on the moving

deck, not looking westwards where he goes and where his home is, but eastwards where something tugs at the heart and beckons him to return, and as the dim outlines of the receding shore become one with the horizon there is a lump in the throat and a mist before the eye.

Take the Indian army, and the fighting man's personal story tells you what history books cannot or dare not say. With Lord Roberts you suppress the Mutiny and relieve the garrison at Kandhar (consistently misspelt and mispronounced by every Englishman as Kandahar). With Yeats-Brown you go with the Lancers to the Pathan country and become half-Musalman and then to the heart of Hindu India and you dabble in mysticism and other forms of other-worldliness, but all the time the polished, crested silver of the mess dazzles your eye and the hilarious, swearing, singing cavalrymen ride and prance before you. With John Masters you fall in love with the tiny Gurkha who swings his *kurki* as gaily as the medieval knight flashed his sword, you see how man and horse behave when the first summons to action comes, you are astonished how the white officer and the native soldiers become one when the spirit of *camaraderie* and mutual respect have vanquished all traces of racial conflict, you hear the bugle sound in your ears, and the camp life on the sleet-covered northern slopes leaps at you with the vividness of lightening on a dark night.

Take the provinces of India (each one a country by itself), and every detail springs to life under the keen eye of the civilian who knows his province better than he knew his village in the shire. The Punjab is a land of rivers and canals and smiling fields and cheerful peasants. None has brought out the sound and smell of the Punjabi countryside so well as Sir Malcolm Darling. He walked from hamlet to hamlet and field to field and met the farmer at his stead. With him we live and work in the village: the small, baked-mud houses with a yard for the cattle; the colourful, flowing dresses of the womenfolk; a tall, erect young woman walking beside the canal with the *changeri* of food on her head for her lord and master who ploughs the yonder field; the eventide when the cattle and dogs and men return home though the curfew no longer tolls the end of the parting day, tiny oil lamps made of clay begin to twinkle in the houses, fire warms the modest hearth around which the dear little children laugh and play and clamour for the evening morsel; the night is still young and the villagers sit outside, smoking the communal rotating *hukkah*, gossiping of the weather, the seed, the plough and the tehsildar; the women sit separately, often in a walled courtyard, talking of their children, their growing daughters, the

reported attractions of the nearby town and the clothes for the coming cold weather; slowly the night deepens, voices become few and low and then fade away, the oil lamps go out one by one, children huddle together in large cots, the doors are shut and bolted, the village goes to sleep, and the well-practised shout of the chowkidar is answered only by the raucous bark of the rustic dog. Soon, too soon for the weary limbs of the hard-worked men, the sun puts the stars to flight, scatters gold over the slightly swaying fields, and men wind their way to work with the ploughshare on the shoulder, the sickle in the hand and the dog at their heels. Smoke wreathes up from the house yards, children come out to play, and the silvery laughter of the village maidens fills the perfumed air. Another day of hard work and simple pleasures has begun.

This is how a civilian would paint a picture of the rural parts of the land of five rivers. Other officials wrote of other provinces. But the Punjab and the Pathan borderland seem to have attracted the English pen more than any other part of India. Amid the bare, formidable rocks of the north-west the English found at last a race which was as proud as themselves. The Pathan called no man his master, and when the white foreigner pressed him too hard he took up his rifle and left for the hills from whose fastnesses he could harass the *feringee* to his heart's content and savour his freedom. He stole rifles from the English armouries and then copied them to perfection. He abducted fat wealthy Hindus of Peshawar who lived on five hundred per cent. interest and did not bother about the capital. He ambushed the convoys and ran away with stores. But the game had its own rules and each side blushed with shame when they were broken. There was in this duel an excitement, an element of equality, a feeling of mutual respect, an aura of chivalry, which were absent in the Englishman's dealings with other Indians. The borderland had captured the English heart and no peril, danger or risk could dim his zeal for a life on the frontier.

There is another kind of Anglo-Indian whom we sometimes meet on our way and who fascinates us even more than the administrator. Take Sir Henry Holland, the famous eye surgeon, who spent his whole life in restoring God's greatest gift to man—eyesight. With a legendary skill and a heart as warm as affection itself, he devoted himself to the service of the people of Sind and Baluchistan, and his sincerity, faith and sympathy were of such rare quality that even those who hated the English rule had no word for him but of praise and gratitude.

The stories that these people tell us add a new dimension to our understanding of Modern India. The fact that they are not writing as professional historians or anthropologists gives them a freedom of action which is used to good effect. Unencumbered with the necessity of observing certain 'scientific' but narrow rules and with the duty of producing a systematic, methodical study, they let their imagination roam where it please. Theirs is not to record or embellish the verities of history or to hamper themselves by treating with well-marked off periods and ages, but to paint a large canvas where the play of light and shade is made by their impressions, experiences, interesting details, anecdotes, prejudices, assumptions, personal likes and dislikes, stories of adventures and exploits, whims and fancies, thoughts and reflections—in short, all that makes a man's life. And life is more interesting and truthful than mere history. They talk less of reform schemes and administrative plans and political agitation and viceregal pronouncements (though these do come into the story), and more of the deputy commissioner's camp in the village, the Anglo-Indian society in Simla, the parleys with the Baluchi tribal chiefs; the ecstasy of sailing down the Indus on a moon-lit night; the army of servants which administered to the needs of the bachelor sahib and whose earnest solicitude sometimes drove him to madness; the trip to the Murree hills in a rickety, galloping tonga on a dusty, broken road; the official inspection of the prison where the armed sentry is fast asleep and the inmates are lost in a game of cards; the courting of the young memsahib on the flowered lawn of a lonely bungalow; the Victorian English club where only Englishmen and dogs were allowed, and of course the native servants; the Empire Day at the local school where the official makes a patriotic speech standing under a picture of Queen Victoria (who had been dead for years) while the little boys smile and clap without understanding a syllable of English and at the end hold the perspiring sahib by the hand, refusing to let go until he has announced two holidays for the school; the pleasures of reading Ovid or Keats under the meagre light of a smoking lantern while lizards and cockroaches stare at this strange intruder; the thicket of words surrounding the youthful sahib as he sits with the aged *munshi* and tries to learn just enough to see him through the language examination—one could go on endlessly adding to these vignettes, and slowly but brilliantly a picture of the real India emerges which you will not find in any history book, and a prayer of thanks rises from your heart and you read on.

This tradition of authorship is an engaging quality of the British members of the Indian Civil Service. It would have been a pleasure to record that in this, as in many other things, they left a mark on their Indian colleagues. But, alas, this acknowledgement will never be made. The literary tradition of the I.C.S. was not passed on to its Indian members. Abdullah Yusuf Ali stands alone as the exception, and his books on Indian history and his translation (with commentary) of the Quran are works of a highly cultivated mind. Some Indians of the provincial civil services tried to shame their I.C.S. superiors: Syed Muhammad Latif's histories of the Punjab and of Lahore are pioneering studies, Ram Babu Saxena wrote the first modern history of Urdu literature. But that is nearly all that can be mentioned, and the Indian I.C.S. officers remain a reproach to this tradition of their service.

However, something can be said in extenuation of this Indian failing. The English members of the I.C.S. were much better educated than their Indian colleagues. The quality of English university education, with its emphasis on the classics, was no match for what the Indian colleges and universities had to offer. It is true that several Indians entered the service after taking an English degree, but they read easier subjects, their background was weak and few of them proved outstanding students. Besides, the Englishman in India was living in a new world which excited him. The novelty of the experience and his personal involvement in it were incentives to reflection and writing. To the Indian, India was a familiar, sometimes too familiar, country, and it astonished and puzzled him to find that the foreigner could discover so much charm in a thing which had begun to pall on his own languid mind. The classical education which the English I.C.S. men had received also taught them to be curious and to go behind the obvious to find out things for themselves. The Indians might also have been inhibited by two other factors: their imperfect command of any language in which they could express themselves (there was no Indian language apart from provincial or regional languages), and their mute, impotent resentment against foreign domination slowly degenerating into a crippling inferiority complex.

* * * *

The kind of Anglo-Indian writing that we have been examining so far is of no ordinary quality and makes, on the whole, very good reading; but in the professional and academic—and one must say the narrow— sense, this is not what literary critics and the British universi-

ties call Eng. Lit. If we go by this strict meaning, India had no place in English literature. In this sense English literature has been a literature of England, not of the empire, a national not an imperial literature.

This failure of India to inspire is astounding. There was a whole world of romance opening before the Anglo-Indians and they shut their eyes to it. There was enough variety and plenitude of character to shape a thousand stories and the story-tellers passed by unconcerned. The fact of ruling over a vastly different people, the mingling of races, the clash of creeds, the natural misunderstandings and the equally natural but somehow surprising love affairs, the homesickness, the adventures on the frontier, the dust of the desert, the waters of the river, the majesty of the mountains, the very thought (awful and awe-inspiring) of ruling over a continent—nothing touched the eye of imagination, nothing made the pen move, nothing had the force and power of inspiration. So much wealth and no touching of the heart! Such a treasure and no gleam in the eyes! So much colour, beauty and perfume, and no moving of the soul! So much marvel and magic and enchantment, and no flame was lighted! No wonder the pundits in London thought Anglo-Indian literature monotonously provincial, jejune and short-tethered and below the dignity of their critical attention.

Generally 'India' has no entry in the index to even comprehensive histories of English literature. But here and there at a few odd places we find a poet or a prose writer writing a few verses or a short essay on an Indian subject, like an historian adding a footnote to the body of his work. To take notice of these stray and rare references is not an attempt at literary criticism (for there is not enough to make a sensible appreciation) but an indication of the paucity of what is available.

* * * *

To take poetry first, for that is the purest and highest form of creative writing. Tennyson gave no thought to India, except in one poem, *The Defence of Lucknow*, where in short and choppy lines the style reflects the tension surrounding the men, women and children who face the doom of extinction at the hands of the Indian mutineers. But he could write much finer poetry, and even as a poem on the Mutiny there are better examples to be considered in a moment. India did not inspire Tennyson, but the empire did. He is the only

poet of the first rank[1] to sing of imperialism. We see from his wife's diary that in 1870 he was getting interested in the question of imperial unity—thus forestalling Disraeli's political imperialism by several years: imagination lights the way for the intellect. In 1872 in the epilogue to the Queen which he added to the new edition of the *Idylls of the King* he directly attacked the Separatists:

And that true North,[2] whereof we lately heard,
A strain to shame us 'Keep you to yourselves;
So loyal is too costly! friends—your love
Is but a burden: loose the bond and go'.
Is this the tone of Empire? hers the faith
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
And meaning, whom the roar of Hougoumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?

. . . The loyal to their Crown
Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes,
For ever-broadening England, and her throne,
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
That knows not her own greatness: if she knows
And dreads it we are fall'n.

An imperialist note is also struck in *Harold* (1876) when Edward the Confessor dimly sees the Imperialistic vision rise before his eyes. In 1852 he had written *Hands All Round* in denunciation of France and in declaration of friendship with America. But in 1882 he transformed it into a more enthusiastic praise of the empire:

To all the loyal hearts who long
To keep our English Empire whole!
To all our noble sons, the strong.
New England of the Southern Pole!
To England under Indian skies.
To those dark millions of her realm!

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

To all our statesmen so they be
True leaders of the land's desire!
To both our Houses, may these see

1. I know that some critics will hesitate to call him this, but I am convinced that no second-class poet can touch the poignant heights of *In Memoriam* in such unforgettably sonorous lines and remain in the second class.
2. *i.e.*, Canada.

Beyond the borough and the shire!
We sailed wherever ship could sail.
We founded many a mighty state;
Pray God, our greatness may not fail
Thro' craven fears of being great.

On the occasion of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition of 1886 he wrote a poem on the subject of imperial unity in the same strain:

Britain's myriad voices call,
Sons be wedded each and all,
Into one imperial whole,
One with Britain, heart and soul!
One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne!
Britons, hold your own.

Similar sentiments are voiced in his verses *On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria* (1887). Tennyson was a member of the Imperial Federation League and was president of its Haslemere branch.

The mediocre quality of these poems is apparent. Even as didactic poetry it has no distinction. We miss new ideas, new fancies, even rhetoric of good quality. But while they sound repetitious and dull today, in their own time they served their purpose well. They inspired patriotism and a love for the empire. By putting in metre the Victorian ideas of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and the unity of the white empire, they popularised imperialism and brought to many an English heart a pleasing confirmation of its loyalty to throne and empire.

Christina Rossetti's *In the Round Tower of Jhansi* was inspired by an incident of the Mutiny which is supposed to have taken place on 8 June 1857. As this poem of 20 lines is little known it is given here in full:

A hundred, a thousand to one; even so;
    Not a hope in the world remained:
The swarming howling wretches below
    Gained and gained and gained.

Skene looked at his pale young wife.
    'Is the time come?'—'The time is come'
Young, strong and so full of life,
    The agony struck them dumb.

Close his arm about her now,
    Close her cheek to his,
Close the pistol to her brow—
    God forgive them this!

'Will it hurt much?'—'No, mine own;
I wish I could bear the pang for both'.—
'I wish I could bear the pang alone;
Courage, dear, I am not loth'.

Kiss and kiss: it is not pain
Thus to kiss and die.
One kiss more'.—'And yet one again'.—
'Good-bye'.—'Good bye'.

It is said that Rossetti wrote this poem immediately after hearing and believing in the story of Skene and his wife in the Mutiny, but later it was not confirmed. The dramatic tone and quick pace of the lines reflect the turmoil of the heart at contemplating the incident narrated. As we listen to the last breathless conversation we can hear the battering of the doors outside and the loud yelling of those who draw near to kill. When the tremor of the last farewell fades on the air, there is nothing left but a sad, stinging silence. It is much better poetry than Tennyson's piece on Lucknow.

Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall (1835-1911) was a distinguished Anglo-Indian who had fought during the Mutiny and later administered many parts of India in peace, retiring as lieutenant governor of the North-Western Provinces. His literary work was considerable, including lives of Warren Hastings, Tennyson, and Lord Dufferin, two volumes of Asiatic studies, a book on British dominion in India and several substantial articles. His *Verses Written in India* were published as a book in 1889 but many of them had been privately circulated before, a few even published in magazines and journals. He used to send them to his sister Barbara, and on occasions she passed them on to interested editors. In October 1878 one such poem, "Rajput Chief", was published in the *Fortnightly*, and recalling that Morley was an editor who rarely liked to publish verses this was a little remarkable.

The verses drew a flattering tribute from Wilfrid Blunt who thought that 'by any one who knows the East it would be recognised as astonishingly true and powerful'.[1] Sir Grant Duff, whose critical faculties were certainly no match for his administrative skill, wrote to Lyall, 'You will now be recognized, by all whose opinion is worth sixpence, as entitled to a very high place among English poets'.[2] Tennyson was a better judge and thought that only two poems,

1. Quoted in Mortimer Durand, *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall* (Edinburgh, 1913), p. 330.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 330-331.

"Theology in Extremis" and "Badminton", were good. Some of the rest would just do but they generally lacked finish. What strikes us above all in Lyall is that he has no delicacy of ear. He is observant, he has ideas, he has deep feeling, and he works hard for the right language. But his sense of music is wrong. There are a few lines which read well, like

North, was the garden where Nicholson slept,
South, was the sweep of a ruined wall.

but the general picture is one of imperfection, at times falling into metallic hardness.

He is more inclined towards meditation and reflection tinged with sadness. The Hindu way of life appeals to him with its subtlety, its asceticism and its other-worldiness. Having passed through the fire of the Mutiny and convinced in his mind that Muslims alone had instigated it he is incorrigibly biased against Islam and perhaps did well to omit the "Swinburne in Islam" from his published book, though it had been included in the 1887 volume meant for private circulation. "The Pindaree" is a dramatic monologue and some of its lines remind us of Browning. He himself regarded "Theology in Extremis" as his best poem, and it is interesting to discover that, more than any other poem, it is resonant with racial pride. He was much influenced by Tennyson, on whom he wrote a book, and often we find him labouring for a lyrical effect, but the spontaneity of lyricism eludes him. His work remains firmly within the sphere of verse, rarely approaching true poetry.

In general, Anglo-Indian verses reflect the loneliness and melancholy of Anglo-Indian life. The Englishman was an alien living amidst a strange culture. At the same time he was the ruler and had to behave like one. On the one hand, he had special privileges; on the other, his longing for England was great. The sense of separation from home, nostalgia and loneliness characterised his existence. Besides the feeling of being an exile there was the tradition of the stiff upper lip and the feeling of doing one's duty in civilizing a backward race. Some of them exaggerated their trials and difficulties in India, partly for self-pity, partly to console themselves by the thought of self-sacrifice, partly to impress their friends and relatives at home. Sometimes this isolation gave rise to despair and dark brooding. All these feelings were mirrored in Anglo-Indian poetry.[1]

1. For example, David L. Richardson's "Consolations of an Exile", "A British Indian Exile to his Distant Children", and "Home Visions"; Trego Webb's *Indian Lyrics*; and some of Sir Alfred Lyall's poems.

There is even less to say about other Anglo-Indian poetical efforts. In 1883 was published the seventh edition of *Lays of Ind* by someone who called himself "Aliph Cheem".[1] It is a collection of fifty-two long and short pieces on Anglo-Indian life. Some are funny, a few delightful in the popular sense, and all fast moving. They must have given much earthly pleasure to second-rate Anglo-Indians who forgathered in the clubs and messes and welcomed recitals of such stuff with guffaws of laughter and rude puns.

If Anglo-Indian India was able to produce nothing beyond a few ditties, songs and verses, ancient and medieval India inspired at least two sustained poetical works, one well known, the other less so.

Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904) was an Anglo-Indian and a public servant who, in spite of his experience of the Mutiny, found himself in deep sympathy with the pre-Islamic Indian genius. Buddha and his message made a special appeal to him and this led, after a considerable and deep study, to his best-known poetical work, *The Light of Asia, or, The Great Renunciation.* It deals at length with the life, work and teachings of the Master. The story seems to spin itself out very well with many passages of love poetry and legend narration thrown in. In imagery he rises far above the common level of Anglo-Indian poetry. The great wisdom of Buddha and the eternity of his message are communicated to the reader with genuine and profound sympathy. The setting of the story is authentic and the natural background is painted with the sure touch of one who depicts what he has himself seen and deeply felt. The blank verse bears the stamp of Tennyson and runs smoothly and mellifluously throughout with the luminous ease of the model. It is not a great poem, but it is verse of a very high order, quite in keeping with the sublimity of the subject. For many years it was popular in Britain and Europe and introduced many in the West to ancient India and to a great religion.

Arnold also published five other volumes of Indian poetry. Two of these were inspired by the Hindu classic, the *Mahabharata*. *The Song Celestial* is the *Bhagavad Gita* in verse. Its rhythm is melodious and yet carries the original's fullness of thought with ease and grace. The blank verse is strong yet pliable and the choice of words well attuned to the theme. *The Indian Idylls* presents eight pieces from the same Sanskrit epic. Here the tone is tender and at the same time elevated. The imagery is vivid and at the same time full of fire. *The Secret of*

1. It was the nom-de-plume of Walter Yeldham; see Michael Edwardes, *Bound to Exile* (London, 1969), pp. 218, 220.

*Death* conveys the philosophical doctrines of the Katha Upanishad in a series of parables. The approach is reverent and deeply sympathetic, as if he is not merely translating or presenting but expounding a message which has plucked at his own heart-strings. The landscape glows with a wealth of imagery. The vigour of phrase mingles well with the delicacy of thought to produce a work which pleases as well as it rewards. In *Indian Poetry* he is still working the rich seam of ancient Hindu lore and presents two more books from the *Mahabharata*, some passages from the Shlokas and, above all, the "Indian Song of Songs". The verse is rich and sensuous and the spirit of Gita comes across in chaste numbers. In *Pearls of the Faith* he turns to Islam. Subtitled "Islam's Rosary", it introduces the West to the traditions and teachings of Islam. Here too Arnold brings to his task the same devotion which we have seen at work in his volumes on Hinduism. The rendering is eloquent and sagacious, full of simple profundities which faithfully capture the spirit of the original.

The Rajputs formed the greatest indigenous nobility of India and their valour was proverbial. Colonel Tod told many a tale of Rajput life in his celebrated *Annals of Rajasthan.* Taking up four stories from Tod, Herbert Sheldon put the Rajput lore in verse in his *The Romance of Twisted Spears and other Tales in Verse* (1909). His sojourn among the Rajputs for thirty years gave him an understanding of their way of life, their history and their values. The scene of the first story is laid in the Chitor and Bundi of 1502, of the second in Chitor of 1536, of the third in the jungles of Chitor in 1290, and of the last in the Rajputana desert in about 1460. The narration has force and verve. He has his heart in what he is telling us and scenes and characters come to life as the blank verse moves from one battle to another, from wooing to love, from pageantry to revels, from combat to dialogue. The interest does not flag. Music and descriptive power sweep us along with deceptive skill.

To come down from Buddha, Islam and the Rajputs to music-hall songs and parodies is to fall headlong from the sublime to the ridiculous. Music-hall ditties and parodies may not be literature (though they are *popular* literature), but they are works of imagination, even if of an imagination of a low order. In imperial imagination, in fact, this lunatic verse fringe has an important place as it reflected the popular emotion about the empire better than sober poetry. So we will take a brief look at it before leaving the English muse.

The Jingo song is a good example of this kind of popular (people's)

verse. In about 1877 when Russia was supposed to threaten the British empire and when imperialism was just beginning to come into its own a song appeared as if from nowhere and was soon on the lips of every one. Its refrain ran like this:

We don't want to fight,
But, by Jingo, if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men,
And we've got the money too.

It is said that it was written by G. W. Hunt and was first sung by MacDermot at the London Pavilion. To this vociferous call of patriotism the Gladstonian Liberals gave the name of Jingo. Jingo is an earlier word dating from the seventeenth century when it meant conjurer's gibberish. By an admixture of Hunt's imagination, MacDermot's voice, Disraeli's oratory and Gladstone's contempt, a new meaning was given to it: noun, supporter of bellicose policy or blustering patriot; adjective, vulgar or vulgarly dashing. Later Colonel Blimp was to replace Colonel Jingo.

The song was in high favour for a few years and came in handy to make imperialism popular. Whatever the anti-imperialist liberals might say about it, the common man who went to the music-hall for an evening of pleasure heard in it a call for action and a reminder of his imperial responsibility and greatness. It fascinated the ultraists and added that touch of extravagance which strengthens the patriotism of the unsophisticated. In this sense and to this degree it was a part of imperial literature.

A slightly more serious approach to the empire, but similar in interest, was that of John Davidson who in *The Testament of an Empire Builder* (1902) made the muse of English poetry pay a typical tribute to aggressive imperialism. The book was inspired by the career of Cecil Rhodes.

Parody is low literature, but literature all the same. A hint of anti-imperialism was introduced by those who parodied popular imperial songs. When Tennyson had written his ultra-patriotic *Hands all Round* a parody of it went round London which ran as follows:

A health to Jingo first, and then
A health to shell, a health to shot!
The man who hates not other men
I deem no perfect patriot.

To all the Companies that long
    To rob, as folk robbed years ago!

To all that wield the double thong
From Queensland round to Borneo!
To all that, under Indian skies
Call Aryan man a blasted nigger;
To all rapacious enterprise;
To rigour everywhere, and vigour
Drinks all round!

It was rumoured that this was the handiwork of Andrew Lang, a man of letters and for years one of the *Daily News* leader writers, who had helped to introduce Kipling to London literary society. Whoever the real author, the parody has withering sarcasm and can claim more vigour than the original.

But anti-imperialism found a nobler voice in Edward Carpenter. When Kipling was celebrating the empire in his proud verse, Carpenter opened his poem on Empire (in *Towards Democracy*, 1883) with these tristful lines:

O England, fooled and blind,
Come look, if but a moment, on yourself!
See, through your streets—what should be living sap of your free blood—
These brutish squalid joyless drink-sodden population flowing;
And in your mills and factories the weary faces, sad monotonous lives,
Or miles of cottage tenements with weakly red-eyed children, worn out mothers

. . . . . . . . .

And this thing cries for Empire.

The cry of the heart in the last line is neither the voice of Gladstonian Liberalism nor the speech of Socialist Radicalism (for both looked kindly on the empire), but the call of conscience and of simple, unadorned humanitarianism. But it remained a cry in the wilderness while the applause for the Jingo song echoed from music-hall to music-hall and from colony to colony. The lure of empire was stronger than the still, small voice of man.

* * * *

Apart from formal history, political biography, autobiography and personal impressions, India does not appear often in English prose. Much of what was written in the form of essays or quality pieces in good newspapers (like Sir Valentine Chirol's despatches) was essentially ephemeral though highly readable. Only a rare name or two occur to

the mind whose contribution was inspired by India and also had a permanent value.

In jurisprudence Sir Henry James Sumner Maine (1822-1888) won a quick European reputation. A product of Cambridge and a great admirer of Austin, he persuaded many people to believe with him in the great value of a study of law in understanding history, philosophy, religion and custom. In his *Ancient Law* (1861), which established his name as an original thinker, he went to India for illustrations of the working of law and custom in early communities. For seven years he had been legal member of the Governor General's legislative council in India, and therefore had a first-hand knowledge of Indian legal tradition and background. The task of supervising Macaulay's codification of Indian law had added depth to his own study and experience. In nearly all his subsequent books, particularly in *Village Communities* (1871), *The Early History of Institutions* (1875) and *Early Law and Custom* (1883), he drew freely on his Indian knowledge, thus giving substance to what otherwise would have been abstract, academic theories. Not only are his examples relevant and apposite, they also add variety and colour to his writings.

Maine was a good prose writer and it is a pity that he did not write on India more directly. In style he belongs more to the eighteenth century tradition of rationalism, closeness of argument, systematic orderliness, freedom from emotion and clarity of exposition, than to the later Victorian practice of highly charged expressions, sentimental digressions, purple passages and high-flown rhetoric. It is a measure of his achievement that, writing in an age whose literary embellishments he disowned, he made a subject like jurisprudence a joy to read. Besides his native qualities, his experience as a lecturer must have shaped his style, for no lecturer who takes himself and his subject seriously can afford to be turgid, vague or uninteresting.

Macaulay had a variety of relationships with India. He drafted the penal code. He composed the momentous minute on education. He wrote a glorious essay on Warren Hastings. In parliament he often spoke on Indian problems and some of his speeches in the House touch on important subjects.

His stay in India (1834-1838) was devoted to the onerous, long and rewarding task of drafting the penal code. In practical politics this is his greatest contribution. Along with the English language, and perhaps more than it in daily practice, the Penal Code is one of the few English legacies to India which appear to have worn well. The drafting

was almost impeccable and drew rich tributes from lawyers to whom drafting was a profession. His Minute on education has the unique but dubious distinction of being notorious and famous at the same time. Considering the irresistible impact of the West on India which had begun its work by early nineteenth century, he had a good case. Willy-nilly the Indians had to take up English and sooner or later this adoption would have been accelerated by natural political and social causes, but Macaulay overstated his plea. Instead of arguing for English and leaving it at that, he gaily marched forth to demolish the battlements of all oriental literature with a fire which was as inaccurate as sweeping. The ignorance of almost everything of the orient is incredible in a man who drafted its penal laws. His enthusiasm for his own native tongue is perfectly natural, but his derision and invective are even worse for the ignorance from which they emerge. But it is brilliantly written and remains a telling piece of literature, though parts of it did not deserve the purple robe in which they are decked out.

Among his essays on India the one on Clive is more satisfactory as a piece of historical writing (though of course he gives the English version of his hero), but the one on Warren Hastings is more vivid and pungent, and though it is a volley fired in the cause of party it sounds well. In the House of Commons, where he represented Edinburgh, Macaulay often spoke on India. Some of his speeches have been repeatedly quoted, and it is said on the testimony of Gladstone that the House listened to him afraid 'to miss a single word that he said'. The praise does not seem extravagant if one considers, for example, a speech on India like the following:

> 'It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. To have a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own. The sceptre may pass away from us. Unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverses. There is an empire

> exempt from all natural causes of decay. Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over liberalism; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws.'

Along with this read the sentence from his Minute on education of 1835 in which he says that the system he recommends would produce 'a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect'.

These two quotations sum up the credo of British imperialism. Everything is there: national pride, self-confidence, righteousness, arrogance, ideals. *Our* arts, *our* morals, *our* literature, *our* laws, glory all *our* own, *English* in taste . . . . And what has poor India got? The lowest depths of slavery and superstition. The contrast was deliberate, for the right to rule another race was at issue. The arrogance is impressive. The assertion of superiority brooks no criticism and entertains no doubt. The highest ideal to be contemplated with pride is the creation of a black Englishman, who will owe everything to England and only his colour and blood to India. The idea is engaging but impossible. Macaulay's sincerity is not in question, but one begins to have second thoughts of his common sense. It seems not to have occurred to his mind that before an Indian could, by some mysterious alchemy, be transmuted into a black Englishman, he had to come into close contact with his model, and this the Anglo-Indian race consciousness ruled out. To treat a race with contempt, to make it read an alien literature in an alien tongue, and by this process alone to transform it into something which it had no intention of becoming was beyond even the Englishman. But perhaps it is unwise to take Macaulay too seriously. When he wrote the Minute and spoke in the Commons, it was not an historian pronouncing the discovery of a truth, merely a politician speaking from his brief. Let us be grateful that at least he spoke well. It is pleasing to think that at least Orpheus was made happy even if Clio went away in tears.

* * * *

Professor Butterfield has said that 'history is put to fiction as a poem is put to music'. The historical novel occupies an interesting place between history and literature; but this place is far from being a no-man's-land, rather it is common ground where the two media of intellectual expression meet and (if historical facts are respected) merge. A good historical novel is history as well as literature. As history it informs and instructs. As literature it entertains and excites. There is an element of escape in all literature (even in some history), but the

historical novel re-creates the past and by so doing often stimulates the imagination of the reader.

Such novels perform several functions. They create a taste for history (and ultimately we hope for truth and facts) among children and the half-educated. They convey the feel of a certain age or society more convincingly than an historical narration, because the novelist is free to stress, to exaggerate, to select, to focus, and is not inhibited by the historian's rigidities of balance and proportion. They also bring historical characters to life with greater force, vividness and colour than the historian's studious care permits him to do.

In addition to these functions which are performed by the general run of historical novels, the imperial novel (by which we here mean novels about the empire) does another very significant service. It is the most effective, because the most interesting, prism through which the common ruler views the ruled. 'Historical' here becomes a very loose term. A story set in contemporary India and published without delay is a personal impression in fictional form, but it is also in one way an historical novel, partly because it often contains references to past events and partly because to its English readers India was 'history'. The point is that many an ordinary reader, whose only window on the empire was the local lending library, saw Canada, the Sudan and India only through the eyes of the imperial novelist and, whether the setting of the story was ancient or contemporary, his history of the empire was more often than not derived solely from what his favourite authors wrote. To him they were historical novels and we are going to consider them as such, the cavils of the purist and the pedantic notwithstanding.

* * * *

A consideration of the Anglo-Indian novel will carry more meaning if first we cast a brief look at some novelists who wrote on other parts of the empire. But before even that it may be mentioned in passing that there were some novelists who did not write about the empire at all but were, nevertheless, ardent upholders of imperialism. This in itself would not have been noticeable but for the fact that their popularity as writers of fiction gave wide currency and (in the eyes of their uncritical audience) special significance to their political views.

A very good example of this is the creator of Sherlock Holmes. Two quotations from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's speeches (not novels or stories, it must be emphasized) will illustrate this point. Speaking in the Lotus Club in November 1909 he said: 'It is only when a great American or Englishman dies, when a mighty voice is hushed for ever, a Tennyson, a Lowell, or a Holmes, that a thrill through both countries tells of that

deep-lying race feeling in the development of which lies, I believe, the future history of the world . . .'. Again, on 24 June 1912 in his address to the Pilgrims' Club Dinner he said: 'It is a wonderful work in which we and others are engaged; and if one ventures to cast one's thoughts on the fortune of the English people, one is lost, not only in pride, but most of all, in the sense of responsibility. For it is so obvious that the future of the world lies in our hands.'[1]

This may sound a discordant note in the ears of some fans of Sherlock Holmes,[2] but such views, expressed by no matter whom, did not raise an eyebrow in the England of the early twentieth century. Kipling was then the rage of the literary world (he got the Nobel Prize for literature in 1907). The ideas of Cecil Rhodes and other pro-consuls still passed current in the political realm. The empire was a flourishing concern on whose permanence, stability and greatness only the blind could cast doubt. The Boer War had split the intellectuals and the political elite, but the rumbles of the schism had not touched the masses who still looked fondly on the empire and were glad to find their sentiment echoed and confirmed by such popular story-tellers as Doyle and Kipling. The star of the Anglo-Saxon race was in the ascendant and those who pointed to the apogee and spoke in praise did not speak in vain.

Coming to the novel of the empire proper, three names at once call for attention. Rider Haggard was, in some ways, the Kipling of Africa. He was, as it could be expected, a former private secretary to the governor of Natal, and put his personal experience of the working of imperialism into his books. His best-known work *King Solomon's Mines*, is a realistic picture of Africa under British rule and in treatment of detail stands favourable comparison with Kipling's *Kim*, though the latter is hardly a novel in the sense of a developing story. Haggard's book has had a very large sale (it began by selling 5,000 copies in two months in 1885), and many years ago received the accolade of modern popularity when Hollywood filmed it.

Perhaps even more than Kipling the popular image of the empire was fashioned by John Buchan. His celebration of imperial pomp was the more acceptable for his Scottish descent. Here was the word of an 'outsider' who could tell even the English a thing or two in the enjoyment of the empire. His heroes were straightforward, simple, sincere men whose virtues were writ large on their character. But they

1. Quoted in Pierre Nordon, *Conan Doyle* (London, 1966), pp. 79, 80.

2. Sherlock Holmes made at least one visit to the empire. In "The Empty House" (in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*) we find him in Khartoum.

could only be white in race and imperial in outlook. They presented a model of what an imperialist ought to be and look. He emphasized the vaguely recognised point that the true and loyal imperialist was one who was capable of 'getting inside the skin of remote peoples', and of being liked by the Asiatic races. This he thought was the outstanding mark of the British imperialist, and in this the Scots were better than the English and the English were better than anybody else.

Buchan wrote for the romantic adults. G. A. Henty aimed at the young. His prolificity was remarkable. With nearly ninety volumes he strengthened the imperial fibre of the British teenager and taught him and her not only the history and geography but also the virtues and merits of the empire. His technique was more effective than that employed by any other spinner of imperial yarns. He created a hero for each book and painted him in such flaming colours that the young reader, excited beyond description, identified himself with the adventure-maker and participated in his daring feats. The young boy (did young girls also read Henty?), with his raw imagination set afire, read on with eyes stuck at the widest point, and accompanied Kitchener to the Sudan, Roberts to Pretoria, Wolfe to Canada or Moore to Corunna. Swept along by his own youthful instinct, the skill of the story-teller and the ingrained interest in his own history, the reader was in the thick of every battle the white soldiers fought, he heard every gun fired by the relieving column, he saw the cities fall, the ships set sail, the peace treaty (!) signed, the empire extend and expand until there was nothing but a huge pink world surmounted by the Union Jack.

Henty's simplicity and directness endeared him to those who were repelled or puzzled by Kipling's obscurities and slang. He was the young reader's author *par excellence*, for he idealized the virtues dear to every young heart: fearlessness, confidence, adventure, courage. But he was also widely read by two other classes: the imperial servants (especially soldiers) and the settlers. To them the stories brought deep satisfaction for they were a proof of the value of their own service to the empire. What they had done and were doing for the empire was, it was very good to see, being given not only much-deserved recognition but also wide circulation. Every story was a welcome pat on their back and a gesture of gratitude. How pleasing to know that the folk back home remembered and saluted them!

Henty has no claim on literature and his name does not appear in respectable histories of English Literature or English fiction. But on one point he is superior to the much-praised Kipling. His heroes may do uncommon things, they may exaggerate their own importance, they

may be proud of what they have done; but they are not jingoes. Their character does not jar on the instinct of justice and fair-play inherent in every reader. They are gentlemen—something for which Kipling could never find place in his long gallery of characters. Therefore Henty's stories create a pleasant, congenial atmosphere. His heroes, because they are gentlemen, win everybody's respect. They have human virtues which touch others' hearts. They don't run away with the wives of their colleagues. Nor do they curse, swear and shout obscenities in the dining halls of the mess. They talk English, not slang. They are imperialists, but above all they are Englishmen.

* * * *

Sir Walter Scott, Meadows Taylor, Mrs. Steel and W. D. Arnold had introduced India to the English public before the time of Kipling. Most of their novels were historical romances: Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter*, Taylor's *Tara*, Mrs. Steel's *On the Face of the Waters*, Arnold's *Oakfield*, and John Lang's *The Wetherbys*. They are documental, factual, and in a way very faithful to Indian life. But there is little imaginative perspective. They are full of philosophical reflections, but the situations are not humanized. In their search for accurate interpretation they sacrifice the human touch, the flight of fancy, the odd arresting thing.

With Rudyard Kipling we enter the proper domain of imperial literature and at least for once India inspires imperial fiction and verse. There is no doubt that Kipling is a part of English literature in that complete sense in which no other Anglo-Indian writer (except E. M. Forster) is. Apart from his literary reputation, which stays high in Britain and other white English-speaking countries in spite of a long and continual line of detractors, he has contributed several phrases to the English vocabulary which are today used by many who do not know their origin. (It is remarkable that in this gift of making his words a permanent part of the language, but in nothing else indeed, Kipling stands together with the Bible, Shakespeare and Milton—an astonishing achievement and a mark as much of his subtle influence as of the insidious impact of imperialism). The best-known of these is 'the white man's burden' which had had more frequent appearance in British newspaper leaders than any other of his phrases. It is still sometimes used, now by the anti-imperialist former subjects of the empire, but few realize its parentage. It was a pithy phrase and in its four words was imbedded a message and an idea which graphically reflected the aims and responsibilities of imperialism. Then there is the much-used and equally eloquent 'East is East, and West is West'. The assertion that the twain shall or

could never meet was an argument implicit in the imperial idea. They could not meet because the East was inferior in everything to the West, and therefore the West had a rightful claim to rule over the East. Kipling is also the father of a phrase which has been on the lips of so many British governments of today and yesterday, 'east of Suez'. It is doubtful if all the recent Secretaries of State for Defence, who have been wrestling with the strategic problems of this area, have been aware of the origin of these words. At one stroke the Suez was made, for all time, a barrier between the East and the West; and for two generations of Anglo-Indians, when the ship had passed through the muddy canal a new world opened before them in which the Englishman's word was law and the people somehow less human than on the other side. 'The female of the species is more deadly than the male' is still another maxim coined by Kipling and put to repeated use by writers and journalists. At least one popular thriller writer ("Sapper") has made the first part of it an expressive title of one of his novels. Then there are some other phrases which have fallen into disuse by the passage of time or by the disappearance of the incidents and events with which they were associated: 'paying the Danegeld', 'killing Kruger with your mouth', 'The Road to Mandalay', 'The Islanders', the sometimes still used 'What do they know of England who only England know?', and perhaps the 'Huns' for Germans.

Kipling's rise to fame was sharp and has few precedents. Some literary journals, like the *Longman's Magazine*, took critical note of his writings in the later 1880s, but his name took a high spring when, on 25 March 1890, *The Times* (very respectable, highly influential and intensely imperial) appeared with a leading article which discussed most of his work and in conclusion offered him a brilliant welcome to the world of literature as the outstanding young Anglo-Indian writer. There is some reason to believe that the writer of this article was Andrew Lang. Whoever the author, the tone of the article was moderate and sober and the quality of criticism high. Once the floodlight of fame was thus directed upon him it never went out, and for long years he continued to occupy the forefront of the literary-*cum*-imperial stage.

Kipling was pre-eminently an Anglo-Indian writer and it is on his treatment of India, in prose and rhyme, that his reputation stands or falls. He is something of an epic writer singing the rise of the English in India. The life of the English in the East, in peace and at war, was his theme. As the English rulers of India were either administrators or soldiers, he dealt with these two classes and brought out, through a description of them, the self-sacrifice and the suffering which imperialism

had made the destiny of the pick of the English nation.

His tales of Simla life are a good portrait of the civilian side of the Anglo-Indian world. Here the executive officials, the secretariat-walas, their wives and daughters (the sons were in England) and the occasional tourist from home live in a comfortable social whirl of picnics, dinners, tea parties, birthday get-togethers and club-revels. They have long rides on fine horses to Mashobra and beyond. They present plays on the modest stage of the Simla dramatic club. They dress in their Sunday best and meet each other at the beautifully sunlit ridge. Occasionally they are invited to the Government House and sometimes even to the Viceregal Lodge, and there is a flurry of preparations. Dresses are discussed, new material is bought or ordered, London shops are nostalgically mentioned, and at the last moment what is available is worn and the finest airs are assumed. Men are jealous of other men who have more beautiful wives. The young bachelor courts the grown-up daughter and sometimes wins and sometimes loses, and sometimes wins by actually losing her. Men run after other men's wives. Women look out for husbands and lovers and are rarely disappointed. The air reeks of snobbery.

The common soldier is probably the greatest character painted by Kipling and (to the English reading public) the most popular. Most of the soldier stories deal with the various aspects of barrack life in peace-time. But a few (five in fact) are about the second Afghan War and the fighting skirmishes on the north-west frontier. In verse he sang of the soldier in the *Barrack-Room Ballads* which is usually considered to be among his most representative works. What is striking in all his stories, both in verse and prose, is the difference in the treatment of the officer and the soldier. The officer, in particular the junior officer, is a paragon of virtue, an honest, sober and upstanding man, dependable, courageous and loyal. The private soldier may be a likeable creature, full of romance and daring, but ultimately and fundamentally he is a comic character. He is incapable of speaking the Queen's English. Only a stylised cockney comes out of his mouth All 'aitches' and last 'gees' are dropped. One result of this is to restrict the appeal and enjoyment of his poems. To all, be they Englishmen or foreigners, for whom cockney is an unfamiliar word they sound facetious and blatantly colloquial. This effectively smothers the element of lyricism which some of the lines, particularly the refrains, certainly possess. Such use of dialect is irritating. More than that, it distorts the character. The soldier appears as a comic figure, very devoted to his officers, very loyal to the Queen and country, very patriotic, but very comic all the

same. So much is this trait overplayed that at times he looks someone out of another world, an artificial creature whose nature is thickly overlaid with art. Kipling had little first-hand experience of Indian soldiering and no direct contact with Indian army life. His biographer, Carrington, agrees that Kipling relied heavily on books and stories related by soldiers for his own tales. But there is little doubt that he was in love with the private soldier. He was deliberately showing up the class distinction between the officer and the soldier, emphasizing the lowly status of the soldier, and expressing anxiety that the lowly should get a fair deal. In this concern for the man who did the actual fighting he was a liberal and far ahead of his day.

His tales of native life appeal more to the English reader than to those whom they are supposed to portray. He has a flair for discovering and using curious local customs and superstitions. All his natives are strange interesting (to the foreigners alone), unfamiliar characters. They are powerfully drawn with the love and care of an artist. But they are not Indians of the normal variety. His India was the India of the farmer, the domestic servant and the tribesman. From his point of view he was right in putting these people forward as real spokesmen of India; for they were the supporters of the raj. Where he offered a distorted picture was in completely ignoring the educated classes. Among Indians generally he had a good understanding of three classes. He liked the Muslims of the north. They were men of action and all men of action had a strong appeal for him. They often fought the English, but they had a code of their own which was based on independence and self-respect. He also liked the Sikhs, for the same reasons of bravery and love of physical action. There was an additional reason for his love of the Sikhs. They represented the liberal revolt against Hindu superstition, idolatory and subtlety of mind. He also liked the tribal people in general for their rugged individualism, their capacity for devotion, their belief that their word was their bond, and even their tradition of vengeance. It was perhaps natural that only the curious should have struck a foreigner, but the result is highly artificial in that no Indian can recognise himself in the mirror Kipling puts up to him. That explains why most Indians have failed to share the Englishman's enthusiasm for Kipling.

Much should not be read, however, in Kipling's Muslim characters. He drew them not because he was partial to Islam, but because they were the only Indians he knew well. But that has not stopped Hindus from entertaining a strong dislike for him. Kim is the only story where an indigenous Indian religion (Buddhism) is sympathetically treated;

and some Hindu critics[1] have therefore given unduly high praise to it.

The native character is beyond Kipling, but the native scene is not. His descriptions of nature and places are excellently done. Even the details are correct and telling. In *The City of Dreadful Night* a hot night in Lahore is magically drawn. The picture of a small police station in *At Howli Thana* brings the scene to real life. There are many such examples which testify to his descriptive power and show the keenness of his eye and the strength and range of the descriptive vocabulary at his command.

Kipling is full of colour and gleam. The stark contrast between the light and shade of the Eastern world, the heat and dust of India, the strange ritual, the stranger superstition, the misery of the poor in the narrow alleys, the resplendent uniforms, the sword blades dazzling the eye in the sun, the colour of the horses, the flowers and the birds in the garden, the straight, clean, well-swept roads of the cantonment, the resonant music of the military band, the milling, shouting native crowd, the merchandise displayed at the sweet-meat shop, the dress of an Indian woman, the pinks and greens and reds of the fruit stall, the carefree gossip of the mess room, the scandals of the government office, the humour of the English club, the tragedy of a noble character in decline, the comedy of the Simla social life, the savagery of a soldier, the patriotic fervour of an unsmiling civilian, the malicious chit-chat of the portly widows, the snobbery of the genteel wives, the flippancy of a *burha* sahib's remarks, the exchange of words with an Afghan horse dealer, the romance of the frontier hills, the chirping of birds at the break of dawn—such images enliven and illumine the pages and bring before the eye the living, pulsating India where nature was supreme and next to nature the Englishman.

Kipling is a story-teller whose genius does not spread out to cover a larger canvas. On short stretches he is admirable; on long marches he is disappointing. *Kim* is the only story which he tried to tell on the scale of a novel. But it failed to develop into one. The picture of the Indian life is larger in size and there is a wider group of characters. But it is not a novel because there is no inherent progress in it. It lacks automatic, inbred movement which is the distinguishing quality of a novel. People in it do not grow up; Kim himself remains at the end of the story what he was at the beginning. All characters are stuck at certain stages and they refuse to develop. They talk and

1. For example, K. Bhaskara Rao in his *Rudyard Kipling's India*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1967.

act like fixtures. Some of them live long but do not change. Thus in spite of the longer panorama, the sharp-edged and cleverly done scenes, the realistic portrayal of daily life, the greater depth of understanding, *Kim* stays a story and Kipling remains a story-teller of high stature who never wrote a novel. To say this is not to deny his standing as a writer but to emphasize the point (which is generally neglected) that he was not a novelist.

From story-telling to novel writing is not a very long step, and Kipling tried to take it but failed. From making verses to writing poetry is a very long step indeed and Kipling never attempted it. His *Barrack-Room Ballads* were received with approval and applause. This could not have been because of any poetic merit, for of that they have none, but because of other things. Here and there, but only here and there, there is some spontaneity in these poems, an occasional flash of the lyric, stray snatches of pleasing music. But it is not poetry, not even poetry of the second rank.

Most of the twenty-one poems in this collection are descriptive, and they describe the vulgarity of the common English soldier on the battle-field and in the mess-room. Brutal violence pervades the lines. There is much savagery. Where violence and savagery are in abeyance triviality takes their place. There is no tender feeling, no delicate thoughts, no idealism, no stuff of which poetry is made. Kipling deals with the coarse soldier who likes his drink and loves to swear, and then he expects the reader to feel sympathetic towards such a creature. This is not even good moralist writing.

The *Departmental Ditties* were hardly an improvement on what had gone before. They are versified counterparts of his prose stories. Mechanical and metallic sounds issue forth on such pedestrian things as the doings of the bureaucracy. There are parodies and comic catches and marching songs. The rhyme never rises to the level of the lyric. The subject-matter is more imperial than poetical: the creed of law, order, efficiency, obedience, duty. If the ballads on the soldiers were only good music hall songs, the ditties on the departments are only passable bureaucratic snatches to be hummed in subordinate offices by junior functionaries.

Kipling's work on India, good, bad or indifferent, has no existence by itself without the imperial sentiment it embodies. It was not the British alone who borrowed his views and saw India through his eyes; the Americans seem to have done the same. He was very popular in the United States from the beginning, as is proved by the frequent printings

of his stories in the new world. The imperial mould of his work explains the fact of his reputation having far outstripped his deserts. What he wrote was consumed partly as literature and partly as a drug to keep the imperial feeling sound and strong. What kind of imperialism Kipling propagated and popularised becomes, therefore, an important question.

It has been pleaded in defence of Kipling that his critics have misunderstood him by confusing what his characters say and do with his own views and by reading too much politics into his work which should be considered as a creation of imagination and nothing more. The argument is that it is wrong to equate the brutality and vulgarity of his characters with his own attitudes and then to draw from this equation a political credo and attribute it to Kipling.

But this has the look of special pleading. Here is a man who spent his formative years in India at a time when imperialism was at high tide and at a place—the Punjab—where British rule was more conspicuous and imposing than anywhere else. A great majority of his characters love violence, savagery, brutality, vulgarity, triviality, coarse humour and other baser instincts of man. They love and fight and live like 'civilized' primitives. There is no hero among them in the classical sense, not even a well-proportioned character who pleases the reader with his humanity. It is surprising that Kipling painted these pictures with a view to conveying to his own people the greatness of the empire. It is astonishing that he succeeded in doing this. It may be that he himself was amazed at the reception of his early work and then went on to give the people what they wanted. But to accept this argument is to doubt his sincerity, for which we have no evidence, and to set him down as nothing more than an imperial drum-beater, which we cannot do for some of his work is genuinely creative.

No, Kipling was not a mere public relations officer of the empire. He was a literary artist who happened to believe that the empire was a wonderous thing and deserved to be praised in word and song. He was lucky in the coincidence of his choice of subject and the general public interest. The moment he decided to write about India at least some success was assured to him. India was a living romance in English eyes. Its remoteness, its mystery and its strange oriental character appealed to the English readers. Its position as the greatest national possession in the world guaranteed considerable attraction. Much had already been written about it and the public wanted more. Since the Mutiny there was almost a personal interest in what went on in India. By satisfying this craving Kipling not only made himself a widely read

author but also heightened the imperial consciousness of his readers and for many years kept the imperial feeling at a high pitch.

His own attachment to the empire had the intensity and dimensions of religion. He went into raptures while writing about it as if he was describing a deity. At times his goddess seemed to dazzle him as glimpses of the Divinity are said to dazzle the religious mystics. To belong to such an empire, or rather to be among its worshippers, was to surmount the littleness and brevity of man and to partake of a sense of the eternal. In his imperialism we see an effort at self-assertion, a craving for self-affirmation, a search for some kind of immortality. If imperialism was his religion, the empire was his church. It brought him security and strengthened his soul. But as is true of all narrow creeds, it also isolated him, first from other creeds, then from his fellow votaries who could not go with him all the way, and finally from a part of his own self which at sober moments flashed signals of doubt and uncertainty. Ultimately Nemesis overtook him and, step by step, led him down from spiritual quest to ardour, from ardour to fanaticism, and from fanaticism to jingoism. In the Kipling of the ripest years there was not a vestige of spirituality left. At the end of a long pilgrimage he came to a strange shrine, because at some point on the way he had become morally insensitive.

Whether his devout approach to the empire was genuine or merely ostensible it could not escape its Victorian origin. The idea of progress was an integral part of his imperialism; in fact it lay at the root of it. In keeping with the age of machines into which he was born he was a firm believer in progress. There is a glow of elation in his words whenever he introduces a new invention. Machine was romance ('Romance brought up the Nine-fifteen'). It was also something more. It was efficiency. Efficiency came through the subordination of the machine to the purpose for which it was designed. If men worked as efficiently, as selflessly, as machines did, the good of mankind was assured. So efficiency and subordination became his watchwords. So law and order became matters of consequence. Action was the supreme thing. Hence his emphasis on the soldiers and administrators who worked for the empire. This admiration for action is a good way off from the spiritual quality of the first stirrings of the soul. It introduces a metallic, material, dull note in his imperialism. But without it his faith in the empire is cripplingly incomplete. The English must show the highest efficiency to confirm their faith in progress and then to extend this faith to the rest of the world, if possible by persuasion, if need be by other methods. Such labour is its own reward and, as the L'Envoi to the *Barrack-Room*

*Ballads* puts it, after a lifetime of labour.

> We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it—lie down for an aeon or two,
>
> Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us to work anew !

This application of religious emotion to a secular purpose is the heart of Kipling's imperialism. Viewing the empire as a church he looked upon the administrators, the soldiers and the pro-consuls as a priesthood which consecrated its life to the progress and well-being of the empire. It was the predicament of this devoted class, like all those who devote themselves to a cause, that its aims were misunderstood by the people, its sacrifices went unrecognized, its work and labour failed to win appreciation, and its sufferings had to be borne in silence. Not only that, but its work in the service of mankind was of a severer and more exacting variety, for it strove to achieve its ends through mundane, secular channels rather than through the easier, more direct, more flexible and more effective spiritual approach. In one of his stories ("The Judgment of Dungara" in *Soldiers Three and Other Stories*) the imperial priest who protects his people and their crops is proved clearly superior to the missionary who is less brave and more misguided. The missionary is engaged in uplifting the soul of man which is already a vessel of spiritual content. But the administrator is trying to raise the ordinary daily existence to an heroic level, and thus to purify the dross of worldly circumstance by such hard and initially unpopular means as law, order, progress and the standards of modern civilization. He is not rejecting the body as a gross, degenerate substance fallen from grace, as the missionary is. He is aiming higher and trying to use this corrupted and profane physical frame for a sacramental purpose.

What did the administrator gain from this service to the humanity of a different, inferior race? Work itself was his reward and the strengthening of the fibre which came with doing his work in the right way. The character-building quality of this work was the secret of its appeal to the imperial mind. Western civilization was becoming increasingly urbanised, artificial, complicated and material. There was a growing danger lest reason might disown instinct and thus destroy the whole man. The character of the Englishman was rapidly deteriorating under the unnatural conditions of his living. A rot had begun in the most vital place—his moral fibre.[1] What was to be done ? Well, in

1. Several other prominent people shared this view in the last years of the nineteenth century. Milner expressed similar ideas in *The Nation and the Empire*. The foundation of the Boy Scout movement may also be traced to this fear of deterioration of character. Examples of Kipling's strictures on modern life will be found in *Many Inventions* and, in fictional form, in *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

part the danger could be met by sending Englishmen out to the colonies which were fit for their habitation. There, by working hard under exigent conditions, life would start anew for them and they would become again what they once had been. In part, the solution lay in responding to the call of imperial duty, and letting the young go out to places like India where the unforgiving school of duty would draw out their finest qualities of character and make men of them. Such work would demand much sacrifice but certainly it was worth doing. 'The game is more than the player of the game'. This is the imperial version of Carlyle's gospel of work.

Hence the great emphasis on discipline in all that Kipling wrote. Discipline, more than courage as Chesterton pointed out, is the passion of his life. It drove him to idealize his soldiers, it led him to preach militarism, and ultimately it drew him to the extreme of jingoism. Even his patriotism seems to have no higher source than this. 'He admired England because she is strong, not because she is England.' To make her stronger was the noblest task one could put his shoulder to. Those who created the empire fashioned the finest instrument for disciplining the nation and giving her strength. Those who ran the empire had a sacred inheritance to maintain and increase, and a failure in this was a crime and a sin. It is a measure of his undivided devotion to aggressive discipline that in all his writings there is not a single reference to the economic motive of imperialism. The solemn concept of empire was not to be sullied by such low considerations as wealth and trade and raw materials and markets. It was a sacred edifice reared on lofty foundations to be contemplated with awe, pride and a grateful prayer without a thought of human greed.

Self-righteousness came natural to such an outlook on England and her empire. Kipling was the chief priest at the revels in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of 1897. It is true that in the "Recessional" written for the occasion he warned against pride and self-confidence. But this earnest warning was given to this 'chosen people'. The possibility that the imperial lot might have fallen to the English without divine behest was not to be entertained. The 'dominion over palm and pine' was God's will (of course supported by English arms). It has been said that the "Recessional" is a poem 'in which Kipling's humility, even, is noticeably dictatorial'. He did not want the English to forget the God in whose service and under whose infinite mercy the empire had been carved out of nothingness. But he himself forgot that much of the empire was the result, not of conquest under divine blessing, but of a fit of absent-mindedness. He also forgot that 'the lesser breeds

without the law' would not gladly accept the Bible from those who invoked Allah before killing the inferior races. He forgot much but he did not forget the empire.

With all due allowance made for the penitential tone of the "Recessional", it yet does not mitigate the Pharisaic severity of "The White Man's Burden" or the "Song of the English". His conviction of the superiority, of the white race remains unshakable. It comes out in his poetry, in his fiction and in all else that he wrote or said. On the inferior races he is always arrogant and boorish, rarely urbane and balanced.[1] To talk in uncivilized terms about what you consider to be uncivilized is not a mark of civilization. As literature is, or ought to be, the purest manifestation of a people's civilization and as Kipling's work is almost entirely based on a revolting racial arrogance, the mind rises in repugnance against accepting him as a part of English literature. Those among us, the non-English, who were brought up on Milton and Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Keats, Bacon and Hardy, find themselves in a different world when they come to Kipling. Different, not only in phrase and accent for every age has its own syllables, but in spirit and inspiration.

The ultimate test of literature, as of all human effort, is its nobility. Literature is revelation, and creation is really an inspired calling; when a human being creates something there shows a flash of the divine in him. The writer pours into his words the best and the noblest that is in him. Shakespeare is great because of his humanity and his capacity to see into the mind of man. Milton attracts us because he takes for his theme nothing less than the Ultimate Cause. If Satan seems to occupy more space in *Paradise Lost*, this is not because Milton did not love God but because in the conflict between Good and Evil the greatness of God is thrown into higher relief by showing that Evil too was strong and yet was vanquished by Good. We read Shelley for his message of hope, for we know with him that 'if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind'. We read Keats for his love of beauty, be it in the ripening of the autumn leaves or in the sweet bird singing of far-off things or in the man ever in pursuit of his maiden, for 'a thing of beauty is a joy for ever'. Hardy cannot bring us tidings of hope and joy, but we still read him for his genius for touching the heights and depths of

1. Gilbert Murray, not an anti-imperialist by any means, was furious with Kipling for his racial arrogance. 'If ever it was my fate', he said, 'to put men in prison for the books they write, I should not like it, but I should know where to begin. I should first of all lock up my old friend, Rudyard Kipling, because in several stories he has used his great powers to stir up in the minds of hundreds of thousands of Englishmen a blind and savage contempt for the Bengali.' Gilbert Murray's inaugural address before the Conference of Nationalities and Subject Races held in London in 1910.

human feeling. His characters fight against fate and even if they fail there is a greatness in the spectacle. By this test of nobility Kipling is an unredeemed failure. He thinks no noble thoughts. He dreams no great dreams. He sees no beautiful visions.

The British Empire was not such an ignoble thing that its most celebrated *litterateur* had to be a Kipling. It deserved better of literature, and it is a tragedy that it will live in the English republic of letters through a mere scribe who failed to pay the fitting homage.

* * * *

India could not inspire Kipling into writing a novel (*Kim* is *not* a novel), but others were more respective, more sensitive to the tumult of the Indian scene, and there is a small library of novels written on India by English authors. India did not produce a first class novelist, and the pedants may grudge what we have its title to literature. But there are over two hundred novels, admittedly of very uneven quality, which are significant because they tell us how an imaginative group of Englishmen (and Englishwomen) saw India and passed on their vision to their readers. What kind of India do we find in these novels?

First, a small but generally ignored point should be made. India was too large and diverse a country to be known by any Englishman; in fact this feat was beyond any Indian himself. In the strict sense of the term, therefore, there are no Indian novels, only novels about parts or provinces or native states of India. There are a few which give a bird's eye-view of India through either a travel across the country or setting different parts of the story in different places; but such over-all views are either superficial or quickly deteriorate into bad guide books made up around a plot which does not hold together.

Of all parts of India the north-west frontier seems to have held the greatest charm for the novelist, as it had for others who found their way to it. The naked rolling hills, the savage but chivalrous Pathan, the 'Great Game' on the frontier, the life of the barrack and the mess in small out-of-the-way military stations, the streets of Peshawar with the unmistakable air of central Asia, the swift raids on British territory and the equally swift reprisals which followed, the friendship between the proud frontierman and the equally proud Englishman, the atmosphere of excitement and adventure, looting and kidnapping, spying and secret goings-on—here was stuff galore of which stories could be made and re-made. No other region of India awakened so much sympathy and interest among the English. This gives the frontier novel a unique place in Anglo-Indian literature. The Pathan is the hero of the story, and

above all it is a story about Pathan life. In all other Indian novels the attention is focussed on the English in India and the Indians stay on the periphery. In the frontier novels the Pathans occupy the centre of the stage, and in this respect they are the only completely Indian novels. They don't show us Anglo-India, but India as the 'Anglos' saw it. But it should also be recalled that for most Englishmen the frontier was hardly India at all. It was more central Asia than India proper, and the Pathan himself looked down upon the 'Hindustanis' of the plains with the contempt and aloofness of a foreigner.

The native states, too, had much interest for the writer of fiction. In fact, the gorgeous East of legend and myth was to be found in the lands of the princes and rajas if anywhere. Undoubtedly there was much to excite the imagination in the pageantry, the pomp, the brutality, the corruption and the intrigue of courtly life Which novelist worth his salt could fail to be stirred by the native, purely Indian life of the *riasat*, the everyday existence of the ruler, the plots and the revels of the durbar, the diamonds and rubies and pearls in the robes and turbans of the rajah, the occasional brilliant rani who dazzled the English resident with her face as well as her ability, the frequent public celebrations when the populace thronged the streets to pay a colourful homage to the corpulent, pleasure-loving ruler on elephant back, the tension between the resident and the nawab, a rare prince who gave his people a clean and enlightened administration and shamed the British raj into envy and wonder? Here again, like the frontier novels, the scene exposed to our eyes is more Indian than Anglo-Indian. The characters and the *milieu* are authentically native. A few Englishmen, officials and tourists, make their appearance, but they are the foil to set the native off by contrast, not figures in their own right Everything is solidly native though seen through an alien eye.

Every novelist chooses his own locale for the story; generally he selects the province or region which he knows well or likes better. There are novels about South India which reproduce the local scene with engaging fidelity and paint the small, vivacious Madrasi to a nicety. There are novels about Bengal which depict with varying emphasis the Bengali's sensitiveness of mind, his passion for violent politics, his artistic temperament, his poverty and his wild breeding, his rivers and forests, his tribes and his womenfolk.

Novels about north India take two distinctly identifiable forms. They present city life with all its complexities, problems, bustle and noise. The politics of the city, relations between the English ruling class and the Indians, Anglo-Indian life in Simla and Lahore, the

frustrations of the educated, excitable and unemployed youth, the doings of the civil servants, the goings and comings of the high-ups, and the native bazaar with its colour, movement and carefree crowds—such is the warp and woof of the urban north Indian plot and the finished canvas has gaiety, light, shade and perspective. The novels of village life are fewer in number but they bring into view a different world. The English in India had a genuine affection for the villager, and the rustic character is always highly idealized. The villager is good hearted but by no means a fool; he has a native intelligence far superior to the mere cleverness of his city kinsfolk. His needs are modest. He is less sophisticated but he knows his mind. He lives close to nature and lets it mould his outlook on life. The finest quality of these countryside novels is their description of natural background: the majesty of the coming of the dawn, the golden ripeness of the corn, green fields swaying in unison to please the rising breeze, the tall graceful woman taking the midday meal to her husband in the field, the peace and quiet of the afternoon, the even-tide return of the tiller and his cattle, the welcome bark of the dog, and at the end the sublime loveliness of the setting sun which heralds the hour of repose for the weary limbs, and the shades of darkness fall and the village sleeps.

On account of its traumatic effect on the English mind the Mutiny was bound to erupt into fiction. The Mutiny novels are of three kinds. First, true stories and experiences of the besieged or harried English have been moulded into fiction. Secondly, broad historical facts (the English version, for here everybody has a version of his own) have been used as raw material, and occurrences and events have been dramatised into stories with high emotional content. Thirdly, the Mutiny has been used as a convenient but sometimes rather improbable peg on which to hang any plot which comes to the writer's mind. One feature is common to all these categories. The Mutineers, and by a simple extension almost all Indians, are always the villains. It may be the siege of the Lucknow residency or the battle with the Rani of Jhansi or the storming of Delhi, the English are always brave, confident, high-minded and self-sacrificing, the Indians always cowardly, savage, brutal, treacherous and selfish. It serves no purpose to look harshly at this one-sided picture of the Indians. It is enough to indicate the fact of this prejudice; it is not necessary to pass censure. After every battle the winner has his own story to tell and he will tell it in his own way.

Historical novel is not the same thing as political novel, though at

times the dividing line is blurred or is arbitrarily drawn. There are only two political sides to British rule in India and both are represented in fiction, though in very unequal proportion. A great majority of political novels, justify, uphold and admire foreign rule. All the usual points are made: the backwardness of India, the commendable order created out of chaos, the vast variety of Indians and their obvious disunity, the shining record of progress, the civilizing mission, the weaknesses and the hypocrisy of the nationalist movement, the social evils and primitive religious ritual, the strategic uses of holding India, and so on. In some novels the tone is haughty, self-congratulatory and intolerant. In others the opposite point of view is mentioned, examined and soberly but effectively demolished. In both the possibility of a British withdrawal is debated, but its desirability is not accepted. A small minority of novels take the opposite stand. India is as civilized and as fit for independence as Europe. The British have no right to be here and must go while the going is good. The longer they stay the less the goodwill they will leave behind Here, too, the usual arguments are cited: the older civilization of India, the racial prejudice of the Anglo-Indians, the declining reputation of Britain among nations for holding on to India without justification, the capacity of the natives to rule over themselves, the underlying unity of India which only a foreign bureaucr cy refuses to see and strives to disrupt, and so on.

This kind of novel has an apparent vested interest and, fortunately for the critical reader, the author makes no secret of his sympathies. The overwhelming impression is one of over-simplification and naivete. The obvious points are laboured, the evidence is selective and the reasoning is loose. The other side has no case. The truth is self-evident and only the blind will not see it. The characters of the story follow the path chalked out by the all-seeing author. At one place all the English are clothed in shining knightly armour and even human error is banished from this utopia At the other, Indians are dressed up in robes of pure virtue and the satanic Englishmen get what their evil deeds deserve. But there is one important difference between these two approaches hewn in granite. The novels in praise of the English not only make better stories but sound more plausible and are better constructed than the Indophil concoctions. The weakness of the latter lies in their shrillness and superficiality. They read like a bad history book. They protest too much and too obviously. It is as if they know that they are arguing a bad case and not even making the best of it. This lack of confidence infects the reader too and creates a barrier between him and the writer which keeps out sympathy, mental participation, agreement and even compassion. Their failure is one of

artistic integrity rather than of political sincerity. Edward Thompson is a good example of this kind of fiction writing.

One outstanding name in modern Anglo-Indian fiction is that of John Masters. Born in Calcutta in 1914, a member of the fifth generation of his family to serve India, he spent fourteen years with the Fourth Gurkha Regiment. In a well planned series of novels he presents the panorama of British rule in India from its earliest glimmerings to its end. Each novel picks up one broad period of this eventful age and, weaving together its history, politics, tendencies, men and motives, produces a whole as rich in perspective as in detail. The narration is absorbing, the style is taut, the characters are etched with skill, the natural scenes are drawn with the eye of an artist, the story moves fast by its own volition and the tempo sweeps the reader along. He has no axe to grind; though of course no Indian could have written these books. He does not go out of his way to sing a paean to the empire, nor does he 'debunk' it. He is a story-teller and nothing else, but he writes with a deep love for his subject. His characters, both English and Indian, are real human beings, living real lives of their own. In conveying the verities of everyday India he is superior to Kipling, not only because his eye travels over a larger canvas but also because his recreation is free of those assumptions which, however well-intentioned, defile artistic creation.

* * * *

On the whole, the India of English fiction is Anglo-India. Partly, and understandably, because the English writers were mainly interested in how their compatriots lived and ruled in India ; and partly because their contacts with Indians were limited by social taboos, racial discrimination and linguistic barriers. They knew only Anglo-India well enough to describe and analyse it. This is specially true of the nineteenth century novels where Indians hardly appear save as menials, trouble makers or servile hangers-on of the raj. The story, the plot, the characters, the involvements, the humour, everything is English or Anglo-Indian. With the receding of the imperial tide and the awakening of nationalism in India there comes a subtle change in tone and emphasis. More Indians, real Indians, enter the story, the Anglo-Indians look less arrogant and more puzzled, political motives begin to colour the development of the plot, the raj appears less and less imperishable, there is greater sympathy for the ordinary native though the violent extremist is still a villain, gradually India begins to wear a more natural look, the touch of the novelist becomes human. But alas! before the transformation is complete imperial rule has folded its tents and departed.

CHAPTER 6

# The Imperial Presence

The British generally referred to India as the most brilliant jewel in the imperial crown, the central piece in the imperial diadem, and so forth. It is possible to go even further without offending truth or honesty. India was not only the most resplendent part of the empire, she was not only the heart of the empire; she was *the* empire. The rest was peripheral. She was the pivot of the empire, the rest was incidental.

Once India had become a British possession, its defence and security became an imperial necessity. On its defence requirements we have Curzon's famous statement which summarizes the British approach: 'India is like a fortress, with the vast moat of the sea on two of her faces and with mountains for her walls on the remainder; but beyond these walls, which are sometimes by no means of insuperable height and admit of being easily penetrated, extends a glacis of varying breadth and dimensions We do not want to occupy it, but we also cannot afford to see it occupied by our foes We are quite content to let it remain in the hands of our allies and friends, but if rival and unfriendly influences creep up to it and lodge themselves right under our walls, we are compelled to intervene because a danger would thereby grow up that would one day menace our security. That is the secret of the whole position in Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet, and as far eastwards as Siam. He would be a shortsighted commander who merely manned his ramparts in India and did not look beyond.'[1] Thus in order to retain India much else had to be conquered or controlled. To keep India

1. Quoted in J.C. Kundra, *Indian Foreign Policy 1947-1954: A Study of Relations with the Western Bloc* (Groningen, 1955), pp. 32-33.

safe every external danger had to be anticipated and provided for. It is worth our while to find out the lengths to which these precautions led the British and Indian governments.

To keep the north-eastern boundary of India stable a number of steps were taken early in the nineteenth century. A kind of control was extended over Sikkim in 1816. In March 1817 Nepal came under British influence. Assam was annexed in 1826 and in the same year Lower Burma was conquered. Singapore had already in 1819 begun its career as an imperial bastion in the East. Hong Kong was captured in 1841 by the Indian navy. A war was fought in 1864 for the sake of Bhutan and in 1910 relations with her were strengthened by doubling the amount of subsidy and undertaking to guide her foreign policy. A little later China was officially notified that Britain would protect the rights and interests of Bhutan and Sikkim. In the meantime the existence of Burma as an independent country was being extinguished in instalments. The first Burmese War in 1826 had led to the annexation of Arakan and Tenasserim. The second in 1852 had resulted in the capture and occupation of the province of Pegu. But Upper Burma still persisted in its independence and, to add insult to injury, still refused to give any facilities to British traders. This inconvenient state of affairs was put to an end by the third war in 1885 and on New Year's Day of 1886 an area rather larger than that of France was annexed by proclamation. The expedition to Tibet, ordered by Curzon and undertaken by Younghusband, had not much to show as results except a wide divergence of views between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy, but it illustrated the Government of India's concern with the security of its north-eastern frontiers.

On the north-western frontier the story of expansion is clearer, more ambitious, more aggressive. Sindh was taken in 1843 by means unjustifiable even by the standards of that age. The Punjab and Kashmir fell in 1846 when the Sikhs surrendered. This brought the frontier of British India in touch with that of Afghanistan and so began the Great Game of Central Asia which, after a series of disasters and unseemly actions, culminated in 1920 in full independence for Afghanistan.

The wars on the north-west were really a part of the wider British-Russian rivalry in Central Asia. Disraeli used to say that Constantinople was a key to India. The logic of the imperial position, as he saw it, was to keep Russia out of Turkey and out of Central Asia, lest she might endanger Indian security. For nearly fifty years the threat of a Russian drive towards India's north-western frontier dictated British

foreign policy in Europe, determined the nature of Turco-British intercourse and bedevilled Anglo-Afghan relations. This attitude was encouraged by enthusiastic Anglo-Indians who, year in and year out, clamoured for greater action to deal with the menace of the bear from the north. They believed and wanted others to believe that the Indian frontier was the imperial frontier and should be dealt with as such. This led to three unsuccessful Afghan wars involving heavy loss of life and prestige and leaving a bitter legacy in the hearts of the sensitive Afghans. But the Anglo-Afghan frontier was stabilised, Russian plans of advance towards India were checked, and Afghanistan's status as a buffer state was established.

One by-product of the Russian scare and of the necessities of the second-Afghan war was the annexation of Baluchistan in 1876. Another was the occupation of Chitral which was ordered in reversal of a previous promise because, as the *Cambridge History of India* puts it, 'it was considered inexpedient to withdraw so long as the Pamir boundary dispute with Russia afforded an excuse for aggressive action from that direction'. And the same authority continues: 'It is, however, difficult to see how any effective movement could be made by Russia from the Chitral side, unless she were in complete military occupation of Afghanistan.'[1]

The actual frontiers of India were now safe. Imperial ramparts were located at advanced positions, doubtful or inconvenient lines were redrawn, the frontier posts were fortified and manned. Sources of possible danger were eliminated by annexation, occupation, indirect control and creation of buffers. One would have reasonably thought that British India could now stand unmolested and needed no further safeguards. But no, the makers of imperial policy thought otherwise. India was not merely a possession, a colony, a dependency; she was the symbol of British supremacy in the world. Any threat to her existence would not only endanger a part of the empire but weaken the whole imperial fabric. The world role of Britain depended on India and its maintenance demanded that the route to India from Britain be guarded. Simultaneously with the consolidation and fortification of India a search had begun for an imperial route which would link the mother country with its dearest possession and thus eliminate all risks, uncertainties and doubts.

This started another period of expansions, this time westwards. Aden had been taken in as early as 1838. Persia was indirectly controlled and so was the Persian Gulf. Cyprus was occupied in 1878,

1. *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. VI: The Indian Empire 1858-1918* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 463-464.

made a protectorate in 1914 and a Crown Colony in 1925. Egyptian weakness and bankruptcy gave Britain an opportunity which she had been seeking since the opening of the Suez Canal. Palmerston used to say that the only British interest in Egypt was the unhindered and safe transmission of British mail and men to India. British domination there in 1882 safeguarded this interest, and a major difficulty in direct communication was solved. In 1904 the *entente* with France set a seal on British supremacy in Egypt when the British won French recognition of it in exchange for British recognition of French paramountcy in Morocco (such horse trading was common in imperial bargains, *vide* the earlier understanding over Cyprus-Tunisia). A few years later, in 1907, the Anglo-Russian Convention resulted in the protection of Tibet and Afghanistan from Russian influence, and at the same time destroyed Persia's independence.[1] Some more horse trading was done in 1890 when under a limited Franco-British agreement Britain recognised a French protectorate over Madagascar in return for French recognition of British protectorate over Zanzibar. A year later the Sultan of Oman was forced to enter into a secret agreement with the British debarring him from alienating any part of his dominions to a European power. Later when it came to be known that he had granted to the French a coaling station at Bunder Jisseh, the Government of India sent a naval squadron from Calcutta and the French concession was revoked under threat of a bombardment of the Sultan's palace. The strategically important coast of the Arabian peninsula was thus secured for Britain. The same story was repeated in the case of Kuwait in 1899, and in 1903 the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, announced that the establishment of a foreign naval base or of a fortified post in the Persian Gulf would be considered by Britain 'as a very grave menace to British interests which we should certainly resist with all the means at our disposal'. The Sudan was reconquered from the Mahdi by Kitchener's forces in 1899. Most of East Africa was by this time in British hands. On the eastern side of India Ceylon was now a British colony. To avoid any difficulty from the only important Asian power a treaty with Japan in 1905 stipulated Japanese support for continuing British presence in India in exchange for British recognition of Japanese control of Korea.

With Gibraltar and Malta already in British occupation an unmolested and free passage ran from Britain to India. Now at last the

1. A British comment on this Convention is apt : 'There is something amazingly cynical in the spirit in which western powers dispose of the heritage of other races'; Lovat Fraser, *India under Curzon and After* (London, 1911), p. 128.

imperial route lay open and clear.

All approaches to India had to be cleared—for was it not the imperial hinge? But some had their doubts which Palmerston had once graphically phrased: because you have a house in York and a house in London, must you own all the inns on the way? And Gladstone had added his own rhetorical flourish when, after describing Disraeli's foreign and imperial policy as an attempt to control all the intermediate land and sea between the English and Indian shores, he told his audience: this is a monstrous claim! But such criticisms, partisan or genuine, were swept aside by the imperial thrill which possessed the nation. In as late as 1929 a young member of parliament (Captain Anthony Eden), who had later much to do with the Suez, called the canal 'the swing-door of the British Empire'. Curzon, a senior imperialist with the immense prestige of an ex-viceroy of India, called the intermediate imperial bases the necessary barbicans of empire, and went on to open before his readers a dire prospect if India was lost. 'Your ports and your coaling-stations, your fortresses and dockyards, your Crown Colonies and protectorates will go too. For either they will be unnecessary, as the toll-gates and barbicans of an Empire that has vanished, or they will be taken by an enemy more powerful than yourselves.'[1]

Such threats proved effective and, combined with the appeal of imperialism to the pride of the nation, the high importance of India was accepted on all sides. That is why the long series of fresh annexations, occupations and successful adventures, all undertaken to keep India safe, escaped serious criticism. India was the most precious possession of the empire, and it must be kept no matter what had to be done in doing so. Even men who saw nothing attractive or profitable in the empire and were fond of teasing the imperialists by describing their life-work as a usurpation of the rights of other peoples (men like Wilfrid Scawen Blunt) agreed that in India, and by extension in Asia, British hands were tied. India was always the exception in the face of which the anti-imperialists either repented of their sins against the empire or at least softened the sharp edges of their heresy.

One noteworthy feature of the Indian Empire was that several of the conquests made in order to keep it intact and secure were the work of Indian forces sent from Indian bases under the orders of the Government of India. Aden, Hong Kong, Oman, Tibet—all these were conquered, controlled or probed by the Indian Government. The

1. See Lord Curzon, "The True Imperialism", *The Nineteenth Century*, January 1908.

result was an Anglo-Indian Empire rather than a British Empire. The freedom and confidence with which the viceroy could in the interests of India order his forces into action on foreign lands show how autonomous and powerful was the Government of India. This initiative and authority vouchsafed to India was a corollary of the major proposition that India was the heart of the empire. It was left, for the most part, to the Indian rulers to find out ways and means of safeguarding her and to take all necessary steps.

The granting of this independence to Indian authorities was in fact in the interest of the British Government itself. By letting India look after its defences and thus extending the physical area over which it could exercise authority, the British Government, through the Government of India, gained access to revenues and military bases in Asia which were not under the control of the British Parliament. It could thus pursue an imperial policy by merely sanctioning or approving the actions of the Indian Government without the irksome requirement of getting parliamentary approval.

India was central to the empire in another respect, too. On several occasions Indian troops were used outside India for imperial purposes. An incomplete list will show the dimensions and value of this help: Crimea 1854-56, Persia 1856-57, China 1859, New Zealand 1860-61, Abysinnia 1867, Perak in Malaya 1875, Malta 1878, Afghanistan 1878-81 and later repeatedly, Egypt 1882, Sudan 1885 and 1896-99, Suakin 1895, Mombasa in East Africa 1896. India was not only the empire, she was indeed one of its makers.

This attention lavished on the possession of India should lead to a reconsideration of the theory that the empire was won in a fit of absent-mindedness. The persistence and assiduity with which the outlying contiguous areas of India (Sindh, Baluchistan, the north-west, Assam, Burma) were acquired and the foreign ports on the way to India (Aden, Oman, Egypt, Cyprus) were controlled gives lie to the theory. To plan to retain India, to work out the problems of her defence, and to clear of all obstacles the five thousand miles of sea intervening between her and Britain make up a task beyond the absent-mindedness of even the most acute mind. The empire was a conscious, deliberate act of faith and the theory of the wandering mind is very nearly a libel on the ability and foresight of those who built it.

The central position of India in the imperial scheme of things is testified by recent developments. When India was given her independence the other parts of the empire, which had been conquered or otherwise retained for the sake of Indian security, also became indepen-

dent. This proves their incidental status. India was the brightest jewel in the borrowed imperial crown. Once it was gone the other smaller stones, set to keep the central piece in position, were returned to their rightful owners. The problem of determining the rightful ownership and searching for the rightful claimants entailed much trial and trouble, but that is a different story.

* * * *

This deep concern, almost amounting to obsession, with the security of India was at times an embarrassment to the British Government, and the makers of foreign and imperial policy did not always escape unscathed from the complexities of their own creation. The story of Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia will illustrate this.

Why was Britain so anxious to interfere again and again in Afghan internal affairs, an anxiety which led each time to disaster, loss of prestige and further bitterness between the Afghan and the English? The foundation of this shortsighted policy was laid by Lord Auckland, an ill-informed viceroy, who spurned all friendly gestures of Dost Muhammad, the new able ruler of Afghanistan who had succeeded in creating some sort of order and unity out of the chaos left by his Saddozai predecessors. Auckland intrigued with Ranjit Singh, a bitter foe of the Afghans, to overthrow Dost Muhammad and put in his place the puppet Shah Shuja. In 1839 the change was effected with deceptive ease and an unpopular and unwelcome ruler was forced on the sensitive Afghans. Three years later the Afghans rose to crush the British forces and turn out their puppet. The British replied by retaking Kabul and, as no more puppets were available, by burning the great bazaar—a petty and futile gesture of frustration. For many a year after this British policy on Afghan affairs see-sawed between a forward doctrine and the *status quo*. Trouble began afresh in 1876 when Lord Lytton arrived as viceroy with instructions from Disraeli to push on with implementing the forward policy. The second Afghan war duly commenced but produced no results except the disintegration of a state which the British professedly wanted to see united, strong and friendly. Once again the policy of the buffer state was put into operation. The Afghan question was not finally settled till after the third Afghan War of 1919 when Afghanistan won its sovereign independence.

What was this forward policy which repeatedly embroiled the British with Afghanistan? It was nothing but what the imperialists chose to call the logic of imperial necessity. The defence of India was the paramount consideration. India was indefensible along the existing

frontiers because they were not natural. The Hindu Kush was the natural frontier and that should be made the ultimate imperial outpost. Three advantages would accrue from this: it would be easier to control the turbulent frontier tribes, the defence of India would be secured, and the Afghans would be persuaded to ally themselves with the British rather than with the Russians. The case was plausible but completely immoral. In political terms it was worse than immoral: it was a failure. In power politics success is the only criterion by which men judge and are ready to be judged. By this test the British forward policy was a fiasco. Another aspect of its practical failure was the hatred and bitterness aroused among the Afghans against the British, which can be felt even today by any casual traveller in Afghanistan.

British arguments (*they* never called it pretexts) for interfering with Afghanistan do not bear close scrutiny. They said they wanted to restore 'a legitimate sovereign' to the Afghan throne. In actual fact they put up a puppet who could not retain his seat even with the help of British bayonets. They also said that they wanted a 'friendly power' on the north of India. This was a prudent wish but imprudent means were employed to effect it. The end, every English philosopher has told us, does not justify the means. In this case the means were so blatantly opportunistic that the result was the exact opposite of what was desired. In place of a friendly power Afghanistan became perhaps the most anti-British of all the lands with which Britain had ever come into contact. They further claimed that their actions in Afghanistan were designed to produce a peaceful and well-administered country, for that was in the interest of British Indian foreign policy. In reality they wanted a ruler who would be obedient to the British will in foreign affairs and would, with British military help, extract allegiance from his people. How was this possible without internal interference which, the British said, was inconsistent with their general policy? They also claimed that they were working for a 'scientific frontier'. The methods used to attain this differed according to the ability and resistance of the parties concerned: with the Russians gentle remonstrances couched in diplomatic memoranda, with the Afghans war and threats of the direst variety, with the independent tribes annexation and reprisals. Rules of international law obviously did not apply to Asiatic states which were 'uncivilized' and un-Christian. The Czar was an enemy but he was a Christian, he was strong, and he was some sort of a European. Sher Ali and Dost Muhammad were neither Christian nor strong nor European, and

neither the law of nations nor international morality prohibited the devastation of their kingdom in the interest of a 'scientific frontier'. How right had Burke been when, speaking at the impeachment of Warren Hastings, he had contrasted English moral standards in England with those of the English rulers in India, called it 'a plan of geographical morality' and condemned it? 'You will see that Cheltenham calls upon Calcutta, as one deep calls upon another.'[1]

The truth is that the British were so enamoured of India that they were prepared to employ any means to keep her away from foreign harm. In 1801 they feared a Napoleonic overland invasion of India and sought Persian help against such an eventuality. In 1941 they again feared a German march towards India through Russia and Persia and they forestalled it by invading a peaceful and neutral Iran. Such fears may appear fantastic, but when one loves something so dearly the faintest threat to it is liable to produce panic and alarm. The danger from Russia to the northern outposts of India was strongly felt and led to equally strong (but unjust) measures. It might have been a good joke to describe the British and Indian Governments' lack o nerve as 'mervousness' (after the name of the place—Merv—in central Asia), but there is no doubt that for the sake of the defence of India the British were prepared to go through fire and water and did not care a straw for the consequences.

British and Russian aims, ambitions and methods were similar. In mid-nineteenth century when Britain was advancing north and Russia was moving south and both were harassing Afghanistan, the logic of their argument, even the vocabulary of their claims, was the same. Read this extract from a memorandum of that period and try to locate its author without looking at the footnote:

'The position of . . .[2] in Central Asia is that of all civilized states which come into contact with half-savage, wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organization.

It invariably happens in such cases that the interests of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations, compel the more civilized state to exercise a certain ascendancy over neighbours whose turbulence and nomad instincts render them difficult to live with. First, we have incursions and pillage to repress. In order to stop these we are compelled to reduce the tribes on our frontier to a more or less complete submission. Once this result is attained they become less troublesome,

1. See his *Works* (1826 ed.), Vol. XIII, pp. 154-156 and Vol. XIV, p. 275.

2. The point of suspension stand for 'Russia'. I have omitted it in the text so that readers can try their wit at identifying the author of the quotation.

but in their turn they are exposed to the aggression of more distant tribes. The state is obliged to defend them against these depredations and chastise those who commit them. Hence the necessity of distant and costly expeditions, repeated at frequent intervals, against an enemy whose social organization enables him to elude pursuit. If we content ourselves with chastising the freebooters and then retire, the lesson is soon forgotten. Retreat is ascribed to weakness, for Asiatics respect only visible and palpable force; that arising from the exercise of reason and a regard for the interests of civilization has as yet no hold on them. The task has therefore to be performed over again.

In order to cut short these perpetual disorders we established strong places in the midst of a hostile population, and thus we obtained an ascendancy which shortly but surely reduced them to a more or less willing submission. But beyond this line there are other tribes which soon provoked the same dangers, the same repression. The state then finds itself on the horns of a dilemma. It must abandon the incessant struggle and deliver its frontier over to disorder, which renders property, security and civilization impossible; or it must plunge into the depths of savage countries, where the difficulties and sacrifices to which it is exposed increase with each step in advance. Such has been the lot of all countries placed in the same conditions...all have been inevitably drawn into a course wherein ambition plays a smaller part than imperious necessity, and where the greatest difficulty is in knowing where to stop.'[1]

This was written in 1864 by Prince Gorchakov, the Imperial Chancellor of Russia, in explanation of Russian imperial policy in central Asia. A British foreign secretary or a viceroy of India might have changed a few words but could not have quarrelled with the substance. Take away the author's name and it is impossible to identify the source. Imperialism was a great unifier of mind and opinion.

* * * *

We have seen above how Wilfrid Scawen Blunt forgot his suspicions of the empire in his observations on India. In thus deviating from the path of anti-imperialist virtue he was in very good company. Goldwyn Smith, the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, who expounded in several volumes the idea that the dissolution of the colonial empire was inevitable, proper and right because the prestige it brought to Britain was but an empty shadow, insisted that in India Britain had a

1. Memorandum of Prince Gorchakov, the Russian Imperial Chancellor, dated St. Petersburg, 21 November 1864. Complete translated text in W. K. Fraser-Tytler, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, pp. 333-337.

high mission to perform, namely, to save her from traditional anarchy and endemic ignorance. India seemed to have had a miraculous effect on the English mind. Nothing but the thought of India could strip the anti-imperialist of his 'liberal' opinions and make him bask in the sunshine of imperialism. This was a measure of the profound effect the possession of India had on the national temper. This possession was a thing of immense pride. It was a mark of world dominion and a sign and proof that Britain had not only a world-wide role to play but also the energy to play it well.

In the last few years of British rule in India the reality of imperial dominion had come to assume the lineaments of an illusion. But old habits, particularly imperial habits, die hard among a people so rigidly brought up on traditions. In the second World War all the costs of war in India were debited to Britain: it is reported that these sterling balances were being accumulated at the rate of one million pounds a day. In plain language Britain was incurring a huge debt, expending much energy and time and suffering many casualties, for the sake of a country where her rule was unwelcome and which she had solemnly promised (*vide* the Cripps' mission of 1942) to leave at the end of the war. Mr. A. J. P. Taylor calls it 'a curious outburst of imperial obstinacy'.[1] India was, in a short-term view, the base from where Burma and Malaya had to be reconquered; but this re-conquest was itself a demonstration that Britain was still a world power. But essentially, says Mr. Taylor, 'the defence of India sprang from habit'. And he may well be right.

* * * *

To keep India safe from external threats an imperial route was opened and kept clear. To protect India against internal decay and disorder a special machinery was created in keeping with the importance and value of the Indian empire. Who were the people in whose care lay the furbishing of this imperial jewel? We already have had a look at some of the pro-consuls, including Curzon, who bent the government of India to their will and moulded its policies nearer to their heart's desire. But the viceregal office had three weaknesses, notwithstanding its enormous prestige and power. It had a relatively short tenure and even that was subject to recall by the home government. In some ways the viceroy was a prisoner of the policies and decisions of the British cabinet and, unless he was a man of outstanding ability or status, he had little freedom of action or manoeuvre. Finally, the best man

1. See A. J. P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 545-546.

for ruling India was generally not available. The roll of modern British politics is studded with would-have-been viceroys.[1] The lure of promotion in domestic politics, the fear of absence from the national party scene, the anxiety about a divided family, the dark possibility of being called upon to spend more than one would be earning, the unwelcome prospect of spending half a decade in a hot, unhealthy climate —there was much to discourage a future viceroy, and this increased the difficulties of making a suitable appointment. Between 1857 and 1947 only two men (Curzon and Irwin) stand out in the long viceregal line whose fitness for ruling this vast empire was undisputed. For others the office remained the Great Ornamental.

For even the best viceroy the sheer size of India ruled out the personal touch. The average viceroy knew little of India before his appointment and this made him reluctant to take personal charge of things. The short tenure completed the list of impediments: in five years it was just possible to visit every part of his dominion once or, if he was exceptionally energetic, twice. Curzon alone was able to imprint his personality on the administration because of a unique concatenation of qualities and circumstances: a masterful temper, an unconquerable feeling of superiority, a painful back, a passion for detail, a taste for very hard work, a penchant for writing perceptive memoranda, intellectual curiosity, an inability to delegate authority, love of power, an unconcealed contempt for those whose standards of efficiency did not match his own, a supreme genius for administration, and above all an untarnishable faith in the high mission of imperialism. So masterful and self-confident was Curzon's mien that the Secretary of State for India, Brodrick, once wrote to him in a light vein that he (Brodrick) knew that he was expected to act as 'George's ambassador at the Court of St. James' and added 'don't think I am complaining, I knew it when I took the post'.[2] Another two or three such viceregal appointments and the history of imperial India would have been different. But...if wishes were horses....

With the viceroy thus out of practical reckoning, the day-to-day running of the empire was entrusted to a group of superior officers belonging to one all-India service. The Indian Civil Service was the

1. For the curious here is an incomplete list of those whose wish to become viceroy was thwarted, those who were offered the office but refused, and those whose names were seriously considered but no definite offer was made: Disraeli (1858), Goschen (1880), Cromer (1893), Alfred Lyall (1894), Esher (1908), Kitchener (1910), Churchill (1915, 1923), Haig (1926), Eden (1943), and Anderson (1946).

2. Quoted in Philip Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India: The Guardians* (London, 1954), p. 196.

centre of all authority, power and initiative. No service in any other country, regime or age has enjoyed such unrestricted power, such high prestige and such uncommon privileges.[1] It was one of the glories of British rule in India and it kept the imperial jewel in a state of burnished splendour.

At first sight the I.C.S. seems to have been a most un-English institution. It was accountable to no democratic machinery, it had unlimited power, and it made the official policy in name as well as in fact. The deputy commissioner was unknown to the English system of government and administration. Yet the British devised for India a system with which they themselves were completely unfamiliar. In thus rebelling against their own genius they showed courage and imagination. This is one way of looking at the genesis of the I.C.S. But a closer scrutiny of the origin produces a different picture. Innovation is a mark of pragmatism, and English tradition was nothing if not pragmatic. To meet new situations by new solutions, to let the axe fall where the disease is, to let problems think out their own answers—this is the injunction of pragmatism. The I.C.S. was a child of this philosophy, however un-English it might look on the surface. The possession of India posed new problems. A people so different in race, religion and tradition could not be ruled by the well-tried English methods. The Indians were like Plato's 'perpetual children' whose development had frozen at a certain stage and who called for guidance and unceasing care. They needed guardians to bring them nearer to the general good through disinterested, efficient service. The makers of imperial policy remembered their classical education when they came to wrestle with the problem of Indian administration. It was a unique opportunity to put Plato to the test. Let the Indians of the common clay be ruled by men of uncommon composition and let the result speak for itself. It is neither mere fancy nor self-glory which has led Mr. Philip Woodruff, a distinguished historian of a distinguished service, to give to the I.C.S. men the Platonic designation of 'Guardians'.

In Plato's ideal state the Guardians were to constitute a separate caste, the highest in the hierarchy of functional groups. In Hindu India there was already a rigid caste system with the Brahman as its roof and crown. The British made but one change in this arrangement: they added another caste to the Hindu social structure, one higher than even

1. It must be confessed that till very recently this state of affairs obtained in Pakistan where the members of the Civil Service of Pakistan enjoyed immense powers without any accountability to anyone, had unheard of privileges and believed that they constituted a heavenly elite. In ability and efficiency, however, they do not come anywhere near the I.C.S.

the all-high Brahman. The new white Brahmans proved good caste men. They were cut off from the commonality, they lived and had their being in isolated splendour, all their material needs were amply fulfilled by the state so that they could devote their life to the good of the common folk, they enjoyed unheard of privileges so that the line dividing them from the rest was clear to see, and they were recruited from the best in intellectual and moral training so that their ranks were not tainted by incompetence or improbity.

This unusual product of English pragmatism and Greek idealism was based on the principle of trust in general capacity. Specialization was suspect. No special training was needed to become a guardian. Experts were mere technicians who knew more and more about less and less. Their narrow training and circumscribed knowledge did not tell them what the general good was. They had a place in the administrative machinery, but they served under the guardians on specific jobs where their technical skill could be put to use. Therefore the engineers, the doctors, the accountants, the agriculturists, the tax inspectors, the railwaymen, all must work in subordination to the guardian leader. The guardian himself could of course not only oversee what these people were doing but, if the need arose, also do their job as well as if not better than they themselves could. The I.C.S. man, therefore, had in his lifetime such incredibly varied appointments as commissioner of income tax, director general of posts and telegraph, chairman of the railway board, controller of imports and exports, accountant general, head of the ministry of public works, governor of the national bank, economist to the government, constitutional adviser, revenue collector, famine officer, judge, and so on. The idea was that any one with a good university education, if properly licked into shape, was capable of performing any function. General intellectual ability, an agile mind and capacity for hard work were the essential qualities of a guardian, and these came from a profitable stay at a good British university, not from technical skill or scientific training. Incidentally, the fact that a competitive system of selecting civil servants on pure merit was established in India before it was adopted in Britain is another proof of the primacy of India in British estimation. By and large the system was a success and, by the standard of professional administration, for nearly a century India was better ruled than Britain herself. The I.C.S. attracted the best men, the Home Civil Service had to make do with the left-over. The I. C. S. roll of distinction is longer and more renowned than that of H. C. S. India could absorb more talent and could put

it to better use: that explains why at least two most outstanding members of the H.C.S. (P.J. Grigg and John Anderson) worked in India during their most fruitful years of service.

* * * *

Promotion, prestige and privilege came early to the members of the Indian Civil Service. They enjoyed immense power in a system which encouraged initiative and independent action. They had privileges denied to any other administrative elite in human history. Their remuneration was generous by any standard, princely by Indian standards. Perquisites, like official residence, servants, leave arrangements, home furlough and pension, were exceedingly attractive. Authority came early to them and at a frightfully young age they ruled an area larger than an English county and more diverse than a European country. The work was so varied that all except the unusually dull found it interesting, even exciting. Caring for a people alien in every thing but common human descent was in itself a new experience which added piquancy to the usual stimulus of administrative work. To see a town taking shape before your eyes, to observe a people developing and progressing under your care, to watch the aridity of a desert slowly vanish before man-made fertility, to make new policies and take new decisions which would raise the level of human welfare, to leave the district a little better and happier than you had found it—this was the pain and joy of every civilian true to his salt. This was the hard daily grind which kept him chained to his desk till the late hours of the night or to his saddle in days of high summer or freezing winter, and this was the part of his life which few appreciated or even cared to notice. It tried his patience to the breaking point to find his life-work slighted by 'liberal minded' politicians at home and his person maligned by 'freedom loving' nationalists in India. The outsider looked at him as an instrument of an immoral imperialism. He looked at himself as a lay missionary devoted to bringing good to people given into his charge. Criticism, particularly of the ignorant variety, riled him and he tried to forget the pains of an imperfect world in the absorption of his work.

To such sorrows was added the discomfort of exile. On his first arrival in India the new civilian found himself in a totally different world. He came with some knowledge of the country, though a little more would not have harmed him, but none of the people. To know a people it is not at all enough to have read a few books on history, law and economics written by foreigners. He was unaware of the values, the traditions, the religious beliefs, the general background of the people among whom he was to live and work for a long long time and for

whose welfare he was to labour for as long as nature and Government permitted He was unacquainted with any Indian language, which meant that for several coming months he could not communicate with any one except his colleagues and the few educated natives whom chance or necessity brought within his official cognizance.

These were crippling handicaps, but other things made them even worse His early impression of India could not have been favourable. Unless he was exceptionally lucky, his first appointment was to a small town in the plains where loneliness was sharpened by climate. His initial duties did not help to ease his discomfort or relieve his mind. For several months he served as a magistrate of limited convicting powers, sitting from ten to four in a small, stuffy room, surrounded by odd looking creatures speaking strange words, hearing witnesses whose standards of veracity were flexible, faced by two lawyers arguing fine points of law which he understood but imperfectly, listening to pleas of mercy and not knowing if mercy would not compound injustice, trying to flick off a swarm of flies without missing an important point. He knew nothing of the background of the persons involved in the case before him, of the social life which bred crime and criminals, of the living conditions in villages and hamlets where land was the blood of life and where scarcity of water made living a fortuitous business To administer law in these circumstances was an act of faith rather than an act of justice—faith in the rightness of his own instinct, in the equity of the law to be applied, and in the certainty that the sentence would be carried out.

He had three allies in the court room: his white skin, the police and his *munshi*. The colour of his skin was his special providence and a perennial source of satisfaction and confidence. He knew that his word was law because he was an Englishman. Membership of the ruling race made him truly magisterial. The police was an ally of doubtful utility. It was not only traditionally corrupt but known to be so Every new magistrate depended on the police more than prudence or common sense allowed, but he had no alternative official source of information. He felt that his years were yet too green for certainty of knowledge, that much of what the police told him was dubious, but it was the only investigating agency and he tried to believe its reports and hoped for the best By and by years would bring their own wisdom and experience its own confidence and he would learn to sift official lies from official truth and the scales of justice would be held even. His third ally was plainly a crook The *munshi* is an old institution in India, but lineage has firmly refused to make it respectable. He

intrigues with the litigants, he accepts bribe without letting his brow darken with guilt, he is open to the blandishments of the lawyers, and he misguides the magistrate with a lofty disregard for the colour of his skin. He is a danger to every magistrate. He is a disaster to a new one. (But he is indispensable to both). The fresh sahib from England, so young and so innocent looking, knows not the local tongue. The *munshi*, who began his fruitful career when the sahib was yet unborn, knows all the tricks and uses them with fine cunning so that the magistrate's duty is combined with his own profit and with the satisfaction of at least one of the litigants.

The new civilian's tale of woes is yet unfinished. His first introduction to India confines him to the urban area. He sees the squalour, the crowding, the heat and the politics of the town and thinks that this is India. He is not pleased. He has still to go to the fields, the simple peasants, the open spaces—to the real India. Later when he comes to hold the charge of a district he would know the pleasures of rural life and there, amid the alien corn, he would discover in his heart a spark of sympathy which would soon link him with these strange people and transform his life in India. But that is yet a few years away, and what he sees and hears now is lying and crime and the low things of life. And this makes life harder.

Above all these official griefs hovered the spectre of loneliness which added a sting to homesickness. Sometimes for miles around there was no white face except the civilian's own. The small place did not boast a club, and even if there were one he would be its sole member and would only carry his solitude into a bigger building. Often there was no library where books could serve as friends. The seat of the provincial Government was hundreds of miles away, sometimes two days' journey. The climate was severe, especially in summer when the day warmed up while the morning dew was still fresh on the grass, and the heat did not subside for many hours after the cruel, beating sun had disappeared under the western horizon. For some time the nights could be unbearably hot when the earth gave up the heat it had absorbed during the fifteen-hour day. Lying restless in the uncomfortable bed on the lawn of his house the exiled youth missed the mild summers of England and the pleasing prospect of green rolling hills, and there were moments when he commiserated with himself.

His classical education must have stood him in good stead in these lonely hours. After the day's work was done, he sat on the verandah in an easy chair and found escape in the odes of Horace or a play by Aeschylus. Shakespeare too brought relief and amusement and of

course the heady wine of English poetry gave much pleasure, the difficult hours flew by and the flagging spirit took on a new lease of life and the world seemed a happier place.

* * * *

Once the civilian got out of the suffocating town a new world opened before him, and it would be a rare man who preferred to go to the secretariat to become a glorified clerk. Before he made a district his kingdom it was usual to be appointed in charge of a smaller area, a sub-division. It was as a sub-divisional officer (the S.D.O. of the officialese) that the civilian had his first taste of power. The area might be of any size between one and five thousand square miles, the average being about three thousand. Often remote from high authority, sometimes far away even from the district headquarters, the S.D.O. was generally his own district officer and enjoyed a free hand. The way he used his independence would determine how quickly he became a district officer.

The sheer variety of the work was an antidote against ennui. There was first the magisterial function to be performed, which included deciding murder cases in the first instance and hearing appeals from the two lower magistrates, the tahsildar and his deputy. Paying blood money for the dead bodies of dangerous animals brought into the court was another duty. The Government rewarded the killing of animals which were a peril to man, cattle or crops. Then there were official papers to be studied and disposed of. There were petitions for leave from the staff which called for firmness tempered with sympathy There were diaries of subordinate officials to be read. There were new schemes to be considered, studied, discussed and prepared: schemes to improve land, to provide more water or a better distribution of the available supply, to streamline the collection of revenue, to devise more effective methods of keeping law and order, to extend medical facilities to more villages, to improve the jail, and to suggest to his superiors changes in rules and regulations. There were reports of investigations to be studied and then either to issue orders or to institute another more careful inquiry or, if necessary, to visit the scene of occurrence. There was the most important function of collecting revenue with the help of his revenue staff, the tahsildar, the zaildar, the kanungo, and the ubiquitous patwari, the village accountant whose knowledge of land and crop was legendary. Ten days or more in the month were spent in touring the sub-division, meeting his people face to face, settling their problems on the spot, seeing the land, inspecting the wells and the canals, listening to complaints, redressing grievances, explaining official

action and inaction, making friends with the farmers, breathing the pure air of the countryside, eating with the village headman or a tribal leader, shooting the coverts, sometimes hunting with the squire, sometimes fishing if a stream flowed nearby.

The institution of touring, unknown to the Englishman in his land, was an unfailing way of knowing the country and its people. The farmer at his plough was a different human being from the litigant in the court. To see the crop harvested brought a new understanding to revenue collection. To inspect the ingenious maze of channels carrying the life-giving water to fields of all shapes and sizes was to learn why the good-tempered, peace-loving farmer was incensed to murder over the distribution of water. The physical exertion of travelling took the grit out of the sedentary town life. The means of transport used in touring retained an exotic flavour till the end, and if they brought discomfort they also provided new experience and opportunity. Travelling on horseback was the most common mode of transport, and for two reasons the best of them all. It was a robust exercise. But it also helped to make the sahib popular among his people. In the north all villagers except the poorest ride when they travel. To see the white sahib doing the same made him one of them and often broke the barriers of race and status. When the saddled horse was not available, he rode a tonga or an ekka, a horse-drawn contraption devised by some sadist to measure the breaking-point of human ribs. At times the terrain ruled out artificial locomotion, and there was no choice but to slog away the miles. In riverain areas he had the novel pleasure of sailing across his sub-division in a well-appointed boat with a smaller one in the tow containing the kitchen and the servants' quarters. Gliding down the Indus on a summer night when the moon was full was an experience which memory was loath to let go.

His private life—if anything could be private in so small a place in a country where most hours of the day and night are spent in the open—was equally removed from the even but artificial tenor of English life. The conventions and frills of what we call civilization fell back to reveal the reality of existence. The picture of the Englishman reading *The Times* and dressing for dinner in the imperial wilderness is a myth. Dinner was often eaten in tennis shirt, flannel trousers or drill shorts, and a pair of shoes unadorned with socks. Electricity was a luxury beyond all small places, and the sahib managed his fillet steak or roast beef in the light of a flickering wick-lamp. The fare was plain and its low cost surprised even the sub-divisional officer. At the opening of this century soup cost 1½ d., chicken 4 d., cooking butter 1 d., and a

milk-giving goat a mere 12 shillings. The monthly kitchen account came to £ 1.10 s. 0 d. Include the European stores purchased from outside and the total could barely touch five pounds. After the dinner the sahib retired to the study or the lawn (depending on the season) and was free to spend the next couple of hours either in pouring over official files or reading some poetry. Not infrequently he would write letters to his family and friends, conveying something of the novelty, the charm and the mystery of the world around him. Or he just sat and contemplated the inscrutable ways of Providence which had brought him, an English lad from a small village somewhere in the north of England, to this exciting, uncomfortable, exasperating, beautiful land. And then, with the reasons for his presence in that place still a tangle of half-understood motives, he would go to bed and try to sleep for in India the day broke early and people rose with the birds.

Promotion to the charge of a district did not bring any fundamental change in the civilian's way of life. The sphere of his authority was enlarged, more people came under his care, his responsibilities increased, and a few Englishmen kept him company in the district headquarters. This last factor was particularly welcome after the lonely existence in the subdivision, though there were men who had by now learnt to live happily without seeing a white face and did not care too much whether the civil surgeon and the superintendent of police were white or Indian or half-and-half.

The important thing was that he was now the ruler of an area which was sometimes as large as a small European state. His actions and decisions affected a million or more human beings. Like Milton's Englishman he could be called upon to do anything, from taking the census to trying a murder case, from fighting the famine to providing for the soldiers passing through the district, from opening a new hospital to appointing a new revenue officer, from issuing arms licences to controlling a disorderly mob. Of course he had a large and able staff to share the work, but the ultimate responsibility was his own. He made or ruined the district. And what he made of it determined not only his reputation and promotion, not only the good of the people, but also the general impression of British rule in India. No matter what the politicians said or did in the cities, no matter what the newspapers wrote or suggested, no matter what the assemblies and councils debated or resolved, in the final analysis, it was the administration of the district by which the quality of British rule was tested. If the district was tranquil and its people contented, the government could with a clear conscience ignore the voluble politician and the raving extremist.

In normal times the district officer knew his people better than did the politician who claimed to speak on their behalf. Politics was an urban activity and carried with it the mark of its origin. The townsman's ill-concealed contempt for the village folk, the cultural gap separating urban and rural life, the marked differences between city and village economies, the obvious contrast between the clever and sophisticated townsman and the simple and ingenuous villager—these factors gave plausibility to the Englishman's claim that, at least for some time to come, the interests of a vast majority of Indians would be safer in his hands than in those of the Indian politicians, most of whom had no roots in rural India and some of whom had never been to a village. It would be imprudent to dismiss as a vain boast the English administrators' contention that the care of the silent masses was the justification of their rule.

Therefore it is no exaggeration to say that the vindication of British rule depended on the district officer. He was central to its foundation, central to its growth and central to its daily impact. He was the coping stone of the government arch. He brought two qualities to his task: one he had to cultivate himself, the other was vouchsafed to him by the system.

Sooner or later every deputy commissioner came to love his district. A few months in the saddle and the grey dusty stretches which had at first worn a foreboding aspect began to cast a spell which neither nostalgia nor exile could break. The purposeless wranglings of the town were left behind. The artificialities of what men proudly called the modern way of life vanished into a deserved oblivion. Fatuous conventions of society departed and left a cleaner, purer pattern of existence. Here in mud houses and thatched cottages lived real men and women, innocent of modernism, uncorrupted by dubious sophistication, unspoilt by the lure of ambition. Touring and camping amid such people was indeed a pleasure. The very sights and sounds were the stuff of a new life: the scent of freshly-cut grass, the glint of the sun on the water channel, the sound of the ancient flour mill where bullocks went round and round making the huge stones grind the grain, the early morning ride and the soft tread of the horse on the ground still damp with dew, the pungent smell of the curry cooking within the house, the sweet frothy cup of sugar cane juice which cut a chilling path down the gullet on a wintry morning, the village elders sitting in a circle on the village green while you sat on the string cot listening to words of wisdom which owed nothing to formal education, exchanging

simple jokes which brought out the inherent equality of man, while the peasant children, half shy, half daring, peered at the sahib from under their long eyelashes and some came nearer and gingerly touched his clothes as if to confirm that he was a living human being like their fathers and uncles. And so as days rolled by affection grew on both sides and India became a mistress which demanded much love and constancy but also returned it in generous measure. Bonds of attachment, as delicate as silk and as strong, multiplied and transcended the differences of race and culture. The deputy commissioner became one with India almost as the soul of the oriental mystic merges with the Infinite.

The second strand in the district officer's web of life was his independence. He was the man on the spot, the pro-consul on a small scale, and he knew it, so did the government which had sent him, and so did the people who had called him their *mai bap* (the mother and the father of the people). The empire had been created and fashioned by men on the spot in their own image and it was but fitting that it should be run by the like of them. Independence was encouraged in the civilian for it was the first qualification required in ruling a country of such vast dimensions and such uncertain communications. It also developed confidence, the first requisite of a good administrator. It also won the respect and loyalty of the people who had learnt from their ancestors that a ruler who could not make up his mind at once and give an order was not fit to obey. Of course it created problems when the district officer, used to unimpeded exercise of power, showed impatience of control and sent a rude reply to the government or sulked in the camp. But mostly the system worked without a hitch. The deputy commissioner was a master but not a despot, an autocrat but not a tyrant, a strong and kindly man who brooked no interference from any quarter with what he considered to be the good of his district. Philip Mason tells us how one of them (in the twentieth century) carefully read a new Act promulgated by the Government of India and then wrote in the margin: 'This Act will not apply in this district'. It never did.

Independence alone might easily have led to despotism. A love for the district alone might have resulted in lack of firmness and the loosening of the grip, so fatal to good administration. But a combination of both evolved a happy system which produced resolute government without sacrificing informality of conduct or originality of thought. Paradoxically, the initiative allowed to the civilian made him more, not

less, accessible. He was left on his own, but he was expected to produce results. You can tyrannize over townsmen, suppress the press, use the police, create a state of crisis, and perhaps, if luck is with you, produce results. But the problems of rural life do not lend themselves to such treatment. Unless the farmers are humoured into co-operation, the land will not smile and be green, the wells will not dig themselves, the revenue will not increase by magic, and famine will not cease to stalk the land by the fiat of an ordinance. It is not a law-and-order problem to be solved by a sheaf of regulations and a few healthy policemen. Here different weapons are used: persuasion, good public relations, the personal touch, contacts unshadowed by *hauteur* or *hubris*. So every sensible deputy commissioner preferred making friends to issuing harsh orders. And he found that the villagers returned the trust reposed in them.

This desirable state of mutual goodwill was encouraged by the egalitarian temper of village life. Villagers are not class conscious like townsmen : even the feudal relationship between the lord of the manor and the tiller of the soil is free of that mutual incomprehension which clouds the capitalist economy of the city. Living in close company with nature engenders a faith in human values and a respect for human dignity which townsmen should envy. To bring racial prejudice or social aloofness into such a society was to open a door to disaster. Moreover, throughout British rule in India the Englishman showed a respect and an affection for the villager which he denied to the city-dweller: one reason for this being the political and agitational character of urban life.

For these reasons (to which every Anglo-Indian will of course add his own) the district officer met his people on an equal footing. He mixed with them freely, he ate their food with his fingers and may even have licked them to show that there was no ill-will, he shared their jokes, he played with their children, and he enjoyed the countryside with the same gusto. Friendships were quickly made and personal inquiries (of the oriental variety) were made and answered without embarrassment. Even the domestic servants of the sahib were not beneath such treatment. They took a paternal interest in him and gave their loyalty which their salaries had not purchased; he requited their solicitude and looked upon them almost as friends. There are instances where this relationship took no notice of the officer's retirement and departure from India; it even transcended death when a sahib's son still sent an allowance to the children of his father's bearer living in

some remote Indian village. Some of these encounters have been recorded by retired civilians and they will bear repetition for they renew man's faith in man and sustain hope when other things spell despair.

Here is Sir Malcolm Darling, at the moment a very young S. D. O. at Dalhousie, writing to his mother from that delightful hill resort: 'Yesterday was a holiday and I had a glorious walk with a coolie to carry my tea, and a couple of books in my pocket, Homer in one and Daudet in the other....My coolie proved a sociable fellow. I asked him what was his idea of God: Is he a big man?" "Yes". "Has he hands?" "No one has seen him, but perhaps". Then he wanted to know how much did it cost to go to England and back? Were their any "black folk" there? and did I send any money to my family? What, too, was my pay?' This was in 1905, when to an Indian hillman an English officer was only a little lower than God.

A few months later Darling, this time in the obscure sub-division of Rajanpur on the borders of Sind and the Punjab, was taking his sunset stroll when something shot into his eye. A chance passer-by, a bearded peasant, came to his rescue. Lifting 'two large fingers smelling of toil to my eyelids' he eased the S. D. O. sahib's agony. They walked together and Darling asked his name. 'Ilahi Bukhsh', came the reply. 'Are you a good fellow?" Darling was trying hard to make a conversation. 'That is as your Honour makes me', was the diplomatic riposte. By now the peasant had shed his initial shyness. The next question came from him. 'What is your Honour's name?' 'Darling sahib', replied Darling. 'Dalu sahib?' the peasant was ruralising the strange name. 'No, Darling sahib', corrected Darling. 'Da-Da-Darlin sahib', exclaimed the impenitent peasant and the brief meeting was over.

It was about such people that soon afterwards Darling wrote home: 'I know it is easy to idealise them: their children are dirty, they live in the middle of dung-heaps; not one of them can read or write. But the dignity of the older amongst them is most impressive: they have a look of self-possession, authority and wisdom unknown in the West.'

A beautiful example of this wisdom was the definition of education given by Darling's Pathan driver, a completely uneducated man: 'Ilm badshahi hai'—knowledge is kingship.

Talk about women and marriage, an unerring test of friendly equality, was not uncommon between Darling and his servants and farmers. Here is a conversation piece, inspired by a reproduction of Mona Lisa hanging in the sitting room, between Darling and his illiterate tutor in Baluchi;

'Who is that woman?' asked the Baluchi.

'A woman of the West'.

'She is very beautiful. I could love that woman. Is she still living?'

'She is beautiful, but she is dead: she died four hundred years ago.'

'I shall not see her then' (with a deep sigh).

'You may see her when you go to paradise.'

'What is her name?'

'Mona Lisa.'

'Monalissa.'

On another occasion the tutor broached the subject of the sahib's marriage. He 'could not understand why I did not marry and pointed out the charms of a certain young lady I had met at Fort Munro I said I was too busy during the day for marriage. "But the night (he urged) is the time for love". Later on, apropos of the examination before me, I said I would give more time to Baluchi when I returned to Fort Munro in September. "No (he said), that is impossible. Here you are old man, and there you are young man"—a remark followed by a guffaw straight, as it seemed, from Valhalla. He was apparently referring to my frivolous life up there.'

On another day Darling was sitting with three Baluchis when one of them 'finding that I was not married plunged into an eloquent account of the charms of married life summing up in the remark—"to the unmarried the night is dark". He had a wonderful flow of language and for five minutes hardly paused. Asked why I was still unmarried, I said my work gave me as much worry as I could stand. At that they burst into loud laughter which echoed down the valley. "Your heart is a stone", exclaimed one of them. "Though it may be as stone towards women (I replied) it is soft as butter towards my People".'[1]

This informality of social intercourse was sometimes extended to the matter of dress. Indian weather dictated much freedom of apparel, and the sensible Englishman sacrificed stuffy home-made conventions to comfort and health. Even Authority averted its eye when one went native, provided that a certain point was not over-stepped. Darling (I quote him repeatedly because his memoirs are unusually frank and because they were published long after British rule had disappeared from

1. Sir Malcolm Darling, *Apprentice to Power: India 1904-1908* (The Hogarth Press, London, 1966), pp. 31, 57, 58-59, 70, 77-78, 100. I have deliberately taken all examples from one man's memoirs (in fact all this happened in the space of two years, 1905-06) to emphasize the frequency of such encounters, though Darling's bachelordom seems to have attracted more than usual interest. Readers of Anglo-Indian reminiscences will know that every volume contains dozens of such heart-warmingly human stories.

India) once inspected his jail in pale blue pyjamas, something no Indian member of the Service would have dared to do. When India was British irresistible authority sat on the English brow which the Indian could criticise but the like of which he could not command. Darling also started wearing his shirt hanging outside his trousers to permit free flow of breeze: a mode much in fashion with the uneducated Indian townsman, the villager never wore the English shirt or the English trousers.

* * * *

One of the most impressive features of the imperial administrative machinery in India, to which a brief reference has already been made, was the intellectual and literary record of those who ran it. Few foreign ruling elites have exhibited so much scholarship and serious study. Hardly any aspect of Indian life, from its flora and fauna to its linguistic chaos, went untouched by the imperial pen. Even a brief resumé of this literary harvest will show the measure of its versatility and academic quality.

Sir William Jones is a pioneer Orientalist whose achievements are too well known to be recounted here. He struck a blazing trail and even more important than his own contribution, first rate though it was, is the long line of oriental scholars inspired by his early efforts. Another man, whose work is unfortunately less known but who in fact went deeper into ancient Hindu culture, was H. T. Colebrooke. He was interested in mathematics and astronomy before coming to India towards the end of the eighteenth century. As a member of the judicial service he was soon intrigued by the uncertainties and subtleties of Hindu law. In order to master it once and for all he learnt Sanskrit so that he could read the ancient texts in the original. His very busy judicial life notwithstanding, he left a body of work which includes several volumes on Hindu law, a treatment of ancient Hindu astronomy, a study of Indian husbandry, and some books on Jainism and Hinduism. He was an amateur in the real sense and, characteristically, took greater pride in his workmanship with a gun than in his Sanskrit scholarship.

Then there was Sir John Malcolm whose official competence was as prominent as his literary skill, which showed so clearly in his history of Persia, his account of Central India, his collection of Persian fairy tales, and his life of Clive. South India got a chronicler in the person of Mark Wilks, Sind in that of Henry Pottinger. There was John Beams, who spoke fluent Punjabi, annoyed the lieutenant governor by his sharp tongue and impish irreverence, taught the indigo planters how to behave towards Indians, and in his spare time wrote a com-

parative grammar of the modern Aryan languages of India. There was also Thorburn, a Punjabi civilian who immortalized himself by rescuing the Punjabi Musalman tiller from the grasping hands of the Hindu moneylender, and whose love for the land of five rivers comes out so well in his books on the province. Sir Charles Aitchison, the founder of the Chiefs College in Lahore, compiled his *Treaties* which described in documented detail the relations of the Crown with every native state in India. Sir Denzil Ibbetson wrote the census reports on the Punjab and crowned this achievement with his hand-book of Punjab ethnography. Other contributors to historical literature on the Punjab were Hugh Trevaskis and Malcolm Darling. Pathan history has affectionately been recounted by Sir Kerr Fraser-Tytler and Sir Olaf Caroe in recent years and by Mountstuart Elphinstone and Alexander Burnes in earlier years. On Orissa we have the two detailed volumes of W. W. Hunter. Col. Shakespeare wrote on upper Assam, and L.S.S.O'Malley on Bengal, Bihar and Orissa under British rule.

British policy in India and its problems naturally attracted the serious (at times anxious) attention of several Anglo-Indian administrators: John Malcolm, Charles Napier, Alfred Lyall, John Kaye, and John Strachey to name only the outstanding few. Nor were the social consequences of British rule ignored or belittled. Educational records of the Government of India were as comprehensive as the gazetteers, but studies by individuals, like A. Howell, H. R. James, Dr. Leitner, Arthur Mayhew and F. W. Thomas, provided valuable historical background and highlighted the important issues. Similarly much attention was given to the work of Christian missionaries in India in particular and the spread and prospects of Christianity in general by, among others, Herbert Edwardes of Bannu, Arthur Mayhew, M. A. Sherring and Sir John Shore. In the field of social problems the administrative mind was agitated (sometimes revolted) by the evils, particularly among the Hindus, prevailing in India, and several civilians and others wrote about them with candour: W R Moore and J. Wilson on female infanticide, Sleeman and Taylor on thuggee, and Edward Thompson on suttee. Quite appropriately there grew up a substantial corpus of literature on legal systems and reforms We have already mentioned Colebrook's outstanding work on Hindu law. He was followed by such authorities as J. E. Jolly and Sir Thomas Strange. Muhammadan law was studied by W. H. Macnaghten, Vesey-Fitzgerald and Sir Ronald Wilson. Aitchison had brought together a great many documents illustrating the Crown Princes relationship But several hands drew the smaller pictures of individual states. Evans

Bell wrote three books on southern Indian states, and those of central India were made a subject of thorough study by T. H. Thornton. The standard work on the wider problem of the native states was written by Sir William Lee-Warner.

Four works involving astonishing labour and produced on an immense scale merit special notice. Kaye and Malleson cooperated in writing a 6-volume history of the Mutiny, and though this was done too near the event to eliminate bias and though many of their interpretations have been successfully questioned by later historians, yet it remains supreme in comprehensiveness of detail. Similar care was lavished, but this time with greater discrimination and judgment, by Baden-Powell on his 3-volume study of British Indian land systems. He followed this up with another volume on land revenue system and still another on the Indian village community. The other two items to be noted are the multi-volume linguistic survey of India by Grierson and the massive Indian Imperial Gazetteer by Hunter. Both these compilations, in which a host of civil servants put their experience and knowledge at official disposal, are unique in their scope, their mastery of detail, their comprehensive coverage and in the amount of obscure (at times esoteric) information presented in the finished product. Nothing like this in magnitude and thoroughness had ever been done before and nothing, one is ashamed to predict, will ever be done again.

It is not difficult to account for the Indian administrator's *penchant* for writing and for passing on his knowledge to others in well-shaped language. More often than not he had had a classical education in England. Classical education has three important virtues: it teaches curiosity, it disciplines the intellect, and generally improves one's penmanship. The curiosity born of a study of the classics was sharpened by the exotic Indian social scene where every new posting opened up a different vista. The disciplined intellect developed two qualities: a keenness of the eye and a lively imagination. The first strengthened the powers of observation and led to original research. The second, so indispensable to good history writing, transported the author into the higher atmosphere of speculation and fresh thinking. A study of Latin and Greek helped to appreciate the nuances of English words and thus improved the style. It is no accident that by and large the Anglo-Indians wrote elegantly irrespective of their field of interest.

The leisure available to the civil servants of those days encouraged scholarly labour. The tempo of life was then slower and the load of work lighter than in later years when wars and political agitation left the administrator of every level breathless and exhausted.

These conditions were reproduced in England where, until 1914, the civil servants had much time to spare for study and writing; then wars and the demands of a welfare State came in alternate succession to shatter the leisurely pace of their life. In England there have been administrator-scholars like Sir Arthur Hirzel, who rose to be the permanent Under Secretary of State for India and simultaneously received recognition as one of the greatest Virgilian scholars of his time, and J. W. Mackail, who retired as Assistant Secretary of Education but was a classicist of fine perception and could have got a university chair for the asking. In India the golden years of the scholar-civilian was from mid-nineteenth century to about the nineteen 'thirties. After that the darkening international situation, the thought of leaving India in a not too distant future, and perhaps a feeling of disappointment at Indian failure to see any good in British rule, combined to undermine the civilian's confidence in his mission and in himself and so to cramp his style and his urge to write.

Two other inter-connected factors contributed to this flowering of civilian scholarship. We must remember that every serious-minded administrator was in part a missionary of the imperial cause. This impelled him to leave behind him some written record of imperial rule in India. In some this impulse was strong and showed in their work; in others it was below the surface but not hidden from their careful readers; and it manifested itself in many ways. At the same time the civilian was encouraged by the knowledge that people at home would eagerly read what he wrote because of their interest in the empire. The rapidly increasing English reading public was not being allowed (even if it had any such desire) to forget the empire by the fast developing daily press Once the imperial interest was aroused, many of these readers wanted to go beyond the newspaper column to books. Thus a receptive and on the whole a grateful circle of readers was ensured for all books on India which was the heart of the imperial English universe. Besides the leisure of those days, this is another explanation for the vast amount of Indian writing published during the imperial heyday. The happy combination of interest and literacy in the public and leisure and literary competence in the author led to much writing on India which in its turn produced two momentous results: it laid the foundations of modern Indian studies and, even more important, it brought about a Hindu revival by passing on its discoveries of the ancient past to the Hindus themselves whose ignorance of their own history and culture had so

far been impregnable. When the impact of the West was added to this foreign-aroused consciousness of a great past, Hindu nationalism came to maturity and ultimately led to the independence (*and* division) of India.

* * * *

The brilliance of the Indian Civil Service is beyond any shadow of doubt In spite of the gibe of the Indian agitators that it was neither Indian in composition nor civil in manner nor a service in demeanour, the verdict of history is more favourable and more just But brilliance in individuals is not far removed from eccentricity. In fact some whimsicality softens the dazzle of brilliance and endears its owner to the ordinary mortals. Perfection may be an ideal, but it is not very desirable because it is not human. A streak of oddity, an element of impishness, a twinkle of mischief, a touch of light devilry, add to the humanity of man, so that what we see is a fellow creature not an unattractive abstraction.

The roll of the imperial service in India rings with names which take all stuffiness out of the proverbial administrative decorum with an abandon and gaiety which seem incredible in the phlegmatic English race. Several picturesque figures flit across the imperial stage, disporting themselves in different roles and enlivening the drama of the empire. Their stories are told in detail by Mr. Philip Mason (Philip Woodruff) in his two volumes on the Men Who Ruled India, and some of them are too engaging to lose anything in repetition.

Job Charnock was a soldier in the service of the East India Company in the seventeenth century. Neither well born nor well educated, he yet made his career through initiative, courage and supreme stubbornness. He saved the widow of a Brahman from the funeral flames of self-immolation, married her and they lived together happily—not ever afterwards (for this is no fiction)—for a good fourteen years. It is said that the woman had a beauty which took the breath away, and Charnock's love was but a fitting tribute to such loveliness. When she died he erected a splendid tomb over her. Who can doubt his grief? But he made it immortal by the practice of sacrificing a cock at the mausoleum on every anniversary of her death. The sacrifice of a cock at the tomb of a Brahman widow! But it was Job Charnock and that is why he stands in this picturesque gallery.

Paul Benfield came to India in the second half of the eighteenth century as an engineer in the Honourable Company's service. He has a record of dismissals and reinstatements which remains unparalleled in the annals of ancient or modern bureaucracy. His first dismissal

came after six years of service followed by a quick reinstatement. Once again the axe fell and he was suspended and then once again reinstated. Another suspension did not take long to come and this time he was called to London to answer the charges laid against him. He must have explained (away!) his conduct to the complete satisfaction of his employers for he returned to India and a reinstatement in triumph. The final dismissal came after eighteen years of service and this time none could save him. His official career had been hectic but rich in pickings. He retired to England with a fortune of half a million.

The first half of the nineteenth century is prolific in such people. There was a Kirkpatrick, the Resident at Hyderabad, who had a Persian wife and who dyed his fingers with *mehndi* (henna,) and when he visited the Nizam he 'behaved like a native, and with great propriety'.

When Josiah Webbe, once Resident at Nagpur and a great friend of Sir Thomas Munro, died, Sir Barry Close, one of the founders of the Indian Political Service, had a tomb erected on Webbe's remains and paid a *mulla* a small salary to guard it, to keep a lamp burning and perhaps also to pray for the departed *feringee* soul.

Major Walkar made himself the darling of Baroda's maidens, not through handsomeness or dash, but through acts of kindness. He waged a crusade against female infanticide with such vigour and concentration that when he visited the palace on public occasions he was received at the gate by a procession of girls of high rank who owed their lives to him. They kissed his clothes and threw flowers on him.

Between the Mutiny and the Morley-Minto reforms we meet several civilians whose eccentricity took an irreverent delight in trouncing authority, and they raise a smile much needed in that staid Victorian age. The finest of them all was Aubrey Pennell, a Bengal civilian whose short spell of service in Burma came to an end when he wanted to run the settlement department in his own way and then to expose a scandal against the contrary wishes of the higher authorities. He was sent back to Bengal and made a judge in the fond hope that the gravity of his new office would bridle his impetuousness and independence. He started the task of keeping the scales of justice even in Mymensingh. In one of his judgments he made such scathing comments on the conduct of executive officials that the High Court at Calcutta ordered them to be expunged from judicial records. He was transferred to Chapra.

In Chapra a policeman and an engineer, both English, beat up a villager of some consequence when he refused to help in the task of damming a breached dyke. Fearing that he might go to court, they

brought a trumped-up charge against him and the district magistrate sent him to prison for two months and dismissed his complaint against the official functionaries. This was too much for a man like Pennell. This was oppression clear and simple: an Indian had been thrashed without cause and then sent to jail without a fair trial. When the appeal of the victim came before him he set him free and ordered a trial of the two assailants. His decision was a stinging piece of English prose which did not spare any official person or process: the Government of Bengal, the Calcutta High Court, the executive officialdom, the district magistrate, and the system of judicial administration which produced such monstrous iniquities. The High Court agreed with the substance of his judgment but not with the severity of his language. He was transferred to the most undesirable district in Bengal, Noakhali.

The change of station did not alter Pennell's opinion of official high-handedness, nor did it take long to produce another case to arouse his instinct to do justice. One day the body of a murdered moneylender was found floating in a village pond. The victim's son reported the matter to the police. But the suspected murderers were said to be close relations of the inspector of police, the inspector was shielded by his superintendent, and the district magistrate upheld the police contention that there was no cause to proceed. Nevertheless, the trial began in Pennell's court. The English police chief of the district lied in his evidence and was caught out. Pennell charged him with perjury, ordered his arrest and refused bail. He took his own time in writing the judgment in the murder case. Apart from an analysis of the evidence and the legal points, it contained passages of cutting words and annihilating wit which indicted the superintendent of police, the deputy commissioner, all officialdom in the province, and, lo and behold, the Viceroy himself, the great and masterly Lord Curzon, who was now called a guinea-pig viceroy.

Three leisurely weeks had been devoted to the composition of this judgment. When it was ready he read it out in the court, gave one copy of it to a Calcutta newspaper reporter, and at once left the headquarters in a boat on an inspection tour. Now in Bengal in certain parts of the year rivers and canals are the only available means of communication, and when an officer is travelling he is out of reach of all attempts to contact him. And Pennell had taken with him all the papers connected with the case along with the only copy of the judgment (the other copy was in the hands of the journalist). The superintendent of police was in jail. The district was without a police chief. No appeal could be lodged since there was no copy of the judgment. In the

meantime the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, the widely-read nationalist paper of Calcutta, was gleefully publishing the judgment in tantalizing instalments in large type. The Calcutta official world stood agog, fuming with impotent rage and powerless to find Pennell who, with perfect nonchalance, was floating down some Bengali waterway and chuckling with delight on official discomfiture.

On his return from this strategic tour Pennell refused to supply the Government or the High Court with copies of his judgment on the plea that he was short of copyists and that the insufficient staff he had was fully occupied in making copies for the accused whose right in the matter took priority. Another three weeks passed before the High Court judges could read the judgment in their official capacity (privately, of course, they had read it all in the newspaper which their clerks had lent them). Pennell was suspended But then his superiors reached the end of their resources. Of what was he to be accused? Of the intemperance of his language? The service, especially its judicial branch, had always had the right to pronounce on executive inefficiency in strong words. Of the freedom with which he had spoken? The independence of judiciary was the bedrock of the rule of law. Nobody seemed to know what to do Two whole months passed without any activity. Pennell was idle. The Government could not make up its mind. At last Pennell's sense of humour showed a way of escape. He left for England without official permission, thus giving the Secretary of State a much-needed excuse for dismissing him for a technical fault. He forfeited his pension. No compensation was paid to him. But when he left the whole district emptied out on to the roads to see him pass, to cheer him and to say farewell.

When Pennells' less courageous English colleagues thought of him they hummed Kipling's line

For Allah created the English mad—the maddest of all mankind!

But there was much solid virtue in this madness. If a man goes mad in the cause of justice so that wrongs are righted and grievances are redressed and oppression is shamed, he has put his madness above others' sanity and restored purpose to human life.

Before this spectacle of virtuous caprice the rest of the band looks colourless. But they had lively minds, a sense of humour and the courage to look Authority in the face and speak their mind without fear. There was Tawney, a deputy commissioner in the Central Provinces, who had once been reprimanded for delay in appearing before his superiors when summoned. He learnt the lesson well and

never forgot it. In future he would always answer the call without wasting a moment of the *sircar's* precious time. He promised to be good. Next time when the summons came he was in the bath. He appeared before a blinking Authority in his tub, mother naked, carried by four orderlies. Official records are discreet on official reaction.

There was Frederick Grant, posted to a poor hilly tract. After a famine had come and gone he was directed to get rid of the surplus rice by sale. Stung by the poor price the rice was fetching among a poor population he bought eighteen tons of it himself and fed the poor on it for a year. He was then a junior official on a modest pay.

And there was Edye, a Harrow and Balliol man, posted in the United Provinces. The commissioner ordered him to fill up a pond to avoid mosquito breeding. He answered that in a country as flat as his no hole could be filled up without digging another. The commissioner should have known the axioms of science, but the commissioner chose to overrule his deputy. Next year an official of the department of health angrily reported that the pond was still breeding mosquitoes. Edye replied indignantly. This was not the old pond: it was a new pond dug in order to fill up the pond named in the commissioner's order.

* * * *

No doubt it was fun to be an Anglo-Indian administrator. There was power to be exercised. There was the excitement of ruling a country and creating order out of nothingness. There was pig-sticking, big hunting, riding over hill and dale, long inspection tours by road and river, and there was the imperial mission to be fulfilled. The task was heavy and long but the satisfaction its completion brought was deep and rewarding. So India attracted the best of England. Some came for money and ultimate comfort, some came for the enjoyment of an adventurous career, and some came with serious plans for improving a portion of God's earth. They came in relays and each pushed the wheel of progress a little further on and then gave his place to his successor and went home to be haunted by glad Indian memories till the end of his days.

In process of time the imperial service entered English blood and families sprang up which sent their sons to India and other colonies generation after generation and the service of the empire became the family badge. Sometimes these families inter-married and the pro-consuls became a tribe; four such families united by the altar vows, the Bruces, the Lambtons, the Greys and the Barings, produced among themselves four viceroys of India, three governors general of Canada and three secretaries of state for the colonies.

On a less elevated plane we find several well-known Anglo-Indian families whose connection with India spanned two centuries: the Masters (with John Masters the novelist and soldier as the last of the clan), the Molesworths (of whom General Molesworth retired as late as 1946 and whose family, the grand father, the father, two uncles and he himself, gave a total of 135 years of service to India), the Mintos (two governors general among others), the Birdwoods (Indian soldiering for at least two generations), the Butlers, and the Lyalls.

CHAPTER 7

# The Imperial Outlook : I

The prospects of a career in India were thus attractive. But attraction is not necessarily understanding, nor does one logically lead to the other. India added much to British prestige and strength. Many Englishmen were happy, deliriously happy, in India for long years. A few hated and despised her with all the corroding depth of a prejudiced or ignorant mind. Happy or unhappy, all remembered her. But rarely was there an understanding between England and India, a meeting of hearts and minds, dissolution of misunderstandings. In this chapter and the next we will look at one side of this picture and try to sketch the outlines of the English image of India. The reverse side, depicting the Indian view of and reaction to the British and their presence in India, is the theme of the penultimate chapter.

* * * *

The love and loyalty of many English civilians and soldiers for India notwithstanding, India was on the whole viewed by the British with much ignorance, considerable bias and some hostility. Some reasons for this are plain to see; others lie hidden in the inscrutable depth of human nature which even historical speculation dare not probe without temerity.

To the West the East has always been, by definition, a world of magic, mystery and strange, unfamiliar things. Since the Greek times at least, and the memory of man does not run clear beyond that day, the wondrous sights of India have been sung in rhyme and prose. Was it not Herodotus, the father of history, whose annals became an extravaganza when he came to treat of India? This Greek tradition

was uncritically accepted by the West along with her philosophy, science and general culture. An untruth thus entered the cultural equipment of the West and stayed there for over two thousand years. India remained, even to the better occidental minds, a half real, half legendary world of myth and fable. Though the very Greeks who had fir t let the fancy loose ruled over a part of India, the general image of a land beyond comprehension had been too deeply etched into the Western mind to be completely effaced.

Human nature sprang to reinforce this intellectual heritage. India was a far away land which few had seen. The adage has it that familiarity breeds contempt, but the adage fails to say that this contempt is, or should be, at least well informed. Is the reverse proposition true? Unfamiliarity certainly does not breed respect or affection. The ordinary human mind, and most of us have ordinary minds, reacts to unfamiliar things in only one way: suspicion, doubt, uncertainty tinged with a vague fear or at least uneasiness. This was the Western and English reaction to what was heard about India. It had the sanction of nature behind it, and moral judgment is irrelevant.

This intellectual-*cum*-emotional attitude took strength from an awareness of Western superiority. The average European, unforgetful of what his own historians have called the Dark Ages, has throughout believed in his superiority over other parts of the world. This consciousness was a blend of a variety of ideas. Christianity was the purest of faiths and those beyond the holy pale were either infidels doomed beyond redemption or the merely ignorant who lived in darkness. In any case they were not the equals of the Christian West. Greek and Roman heritage, too, had made the West the centre of world civilization. It was a heritage rich with gifts which elevate human existence to a life of taste and manners: science, philosophy, art, literature, law. Intensely conscious of its wealth of intellectual and mental achievements, the West was quickly confirmed in its faith in the primacy of its civilization. The original suspicion of the unfamiliar barred the way to an acknowledgement of other civilizations which could claim equal distinction. From the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards this feeling of superiority developed into an obsession when the West made miraculous advances in industry and manufacture. Material progress was interpreted as the final proof of the superiority of the West. Woe be to him who would deny such a striking manifestation! With the expansion of trade and industry came greed and ambition and imperialism entered the vocabulary of man. The empire contributed the final, and the one clearly reprehensible, idea to the Western outlook: belief

in the superiority of the white race. From that moment till the close of the era of empires racial feeling was a potent element in the composition of the Western mind.

* * * *

This is the historical background to the British-Indian encounter. What actually took place during the encounter had much the same effect on British outlook.

The first thing which must have given a jolt to the Englishman was the discovery that the Indians were so completely different from himself. Not only were they different, but the dissimilarities seemed irrevocable. It was not merely a difference in religion or food or dress. It went far deeper into whatever moulds human life. Their way of life was not his. Their traditions, their values, their very categories of thought were far removed from what he, as a European and as a traveller, had met before. He knew Europe and Europe was a continent, but European life had flowed out of two fountainheads, Greco-Roman civilization and Christian faith. In spite of this common origin European countries and peoples had marked differences: the Latin races were not the same as the Anglo-Saxon. But he had never seen people so totally different from him as were the Indians. This was a staggering discovery which shook his whole being and from the effects of which he could never recover. The most he could persuade himself to do was to tolerate the new people, but to understand them seemed beyond the realm of possibility.

A second deterrent, for which the English were not at all responsible, was the immense diversity of India. India was a land of infinite variety which not only her previous conquerors but even her own peoples had not been able to comprehend. The frontierman inhabiting the upper reaches of the Indus had less in common with the south Indian than a Scandinavian had with a Greek or an Italian. Still Europe was one civilization, one cultural and spiritual entity. Its Greco-Roman and Christian heritage was shared by all and there was an underlying unity which made the West at least a community if not a nation. But in India two contiguous provinces could present a stark contrast which was the despair of the foreign observer. No Indian himself could ever claim to know India: he knew only his own province or perhaps some areas in the neighbourhood. India was no more than a geographical expression to which the alien sword of successive conquerors had vouchsafed a semblance of a political unity. Take the work of the most perceptive Anglo-Indian writer and you will notice that after a lifetime spent in India he writes with confidence about only one

province; when he tries to cast his net wider he only indulges in vague generalities which mean little. When lack of previous knowledge, historical prejudice and cultural disparity between the West and India were added to the difficulty—nay, impossibility—of understanding the immense diversity of India, the air was heavy with incomprehension.

The Western attempt to understand India was thwarted by another factor: the divergence between Indian theory or tradition and practice. Some in the West were undoubtedly aware of the great Indian civilization. The achievements of the ancient Hindus were known to some European historians and savants. Several European travellers and envoys had conveyed to their people some idea of the heights of civilization reached under the Mughuls. Along with this there was a general impression in the West that the East, and particularly India, was the centre of an enviable spirituality, and a number of philosophers and thinkers had dwelt on the theme of Western materialism *versus* Indian spirituality. Once given the prestige of the written word, such stereotypes are liable to gain quick currency. People are apt to accept an oft-repeated generality as the truth.

In many European circles, therefore, it was understood that India was the home of ancient civilizations and that she had some sort of a spiritual message to give to the materialist West. Some of the English who came to India with some knowledge of the country hoped to discover an ancient civilization and an inspiring atmosphere. But they arrived in the wrong century and in the wrong position. They came at a time when India was in the throes of chaos, cultural deterioration and political dissolution. The hour of glory had run out with the passing of the Mughul splendour. A strong and united empire was giving way to a welter of rival principalities. Material prosperity was fast disappearing. In such an age of suspicion, anxiety and despondency, culture and graceful living are the first to come to grief. The English also came in the wrong capacity. They entered full of confidence in their own superiority. They did not come as students to learn the secrets of the spirit of the East, nor as pilgrims to admire its civilization. They came as traders or warriors to a land which their imagination had already bestowed with the fanciful extremes of bejewelled women and inspired saints.

But a shock was in store for them. What met their gaze was the depressing spectacle of a once-great empire tottering to its fall. What they saw was not a civilization hallowed by time, but only a caricature of it. There was no sign of that spiritual quality of which they had heard high praises in Europe. What confronted them was a religion

which sanctified meaningless ritual and blessed such abhorrent practices as the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, the sacrificing of live children to propitiate goddesses sculptured out of stone by human hands; the strangulating of new-born girls to avoid the shame of having daughters, the marrying of young girls to old lechers for gain of money, the feeding of 'sacred' crocodiles on young children to prevent some supernatural visitation, the offering of young maidens to the temple priests for prostitution, the keeping of hundreds of concubines to satisfy lust, and the worshipping of the cow as the mother of the people.

Was this the purity of religious experience of which they had heard so much? Where were the saints, the minor prophets, the apostles who said they had solved the mystery of life and of the hereafter? Where were the God-intoxicated men who had merged their souls with the Infinite and transcended the bounds of this world without leaving it? They asked such questions in surprise and sometimes in wrath, and their own eyes gave them the answer. They saw selfish men fighting among themselves for petty gain, hired soldiers whose sword was in the market for a pittance, dissolute provincial rulers whose courts were full of bad singers and wanton courtesans and empty of wise counsellors, bands of roving Marathas who carried fire and pestilence in the name of a spurious nationalism, an old Mughul emperor, the last of the house of Timur, whose palsied hands were unfit to hold the sceptre. They saw all this and judged India by what they saw, not by what people said she had once been. They had come to India to found an empire, not to discern the hidden ancient truth and judge the present by the past. If this was India, she merited neither attention, nor sympathy, nor understanding. Seen in this light it is not surprising that the English had little respect for India and no will to understand her; in fact, it is astonishing that there were still some among them whose gaze pierced the veil of contemporary reality and had an inkling of what lay beyond.

But these men were exceptions and they could not check or turn back the current of incomprehension which poisoned the minds of the conquerors as much as those of the conquered. No serious or sustained effort was made to enter into the Indian mind. There are two major pieces of evidence to prove this.

One is the failure of the British to learn an Indian language. When we recall the long tenure of British rule and the fact that the Anglo-Indian spent thirty tof orty years of his life in India and that there were thousands of Englishmen who had practically settled down in India, it

is unbelievable that so few among them should have picked up a language of their subjects. The civilians and the soldiers had to pass a language examination, but we know from their own accounts how light heartedly they prepared for it and how easily they got through. Other administrators were even less persuaded to acquire a native tongue, and the planters of Assam, Bengal and Bihar and the big traders of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras learned just enough to be able to talk to their domestic servants. In the novels on India written by persons of long Indian experience (like Flora Annie Steel, Rudyard Kipling, Edward Thompson and others) words and phrases of Indian languages are used so atrociously as to make any school teacher reach for his red pencil.

Language is the key to understanding a people. A knowledge of it not only opens a door to their literature, religious beliefs and traditions, but also makes it possible to cultivate the living generation. An Englishman would have been horrified at the pretensions of an Indian or a Frenchman or a Japanese who wrote books on England without knowing more English than was required to direct a London taxi driver or order an English maid in imperative monosyllables. But this is precisely what the English did in relation to India, apparently without realizing how precarious and fitful was their grasp of Indian sentiment and opinion.

It is not difficult to understand the reasons for this refusal—for it was a deliberate act of choice—to learn an Indian language. The Englishman shares with all other peoples on this planet a belief in the superiority of his own tongue; but he goes an ominous step further and refuses to acquire any other language, expecting others to learn his if they desire communication. He is a bad linguist and imperialism must partly account for this. When half the world was ruled by those who spoke English and a very large country in the other hemisphere also spoke a language very much resembling English, the necessity for any linguistic acquisition was small indeed. Then of course there was the obvious reluctance to waste time and effort on learning the language of a subject people. Still another indomitable obstacle was the amazing variety of Indian languages, some of which were as different from one another as Chinese is from Italian. It took a few years for an Englishman, accustomed to the undefiled well of his own tongue, to realize the linguistic diversity of India—a paradise for the student of the loom of languages, but a despair to all others—; a few more years passed before he could decide which of the available languages he should try to learn; in the meantime he was probably transferred to another province

where he heard another tongue on the lips of another people; and in sheer frustration he gave up all efforts to pick up any native language and continued to use his own.[1]

This is an explanation of English reluctance to try to know an Indian language. But it is not a justification, because it implies that there was no necessity to understand the Indians. Had there been an intention of understanding them, the learning of their language would have been the first claim on the Englishman's time and ability. It might also have affected the nature and contours of British rule, for by refusing to understand them the English created in the Indians a bitter feeling of inferiority and resentment.

The second piece of evidence in support of British lack of initiative in building an Anglo-Indian bridge is the enthusiasm and determination with which an English frame-work of ideas and practice was sought to be imposed upon India. English was the tongue of England, therefore it must supplant Persian. Principles of English law were the best safeguard of the liberties of the citizen, therefore they must be incorporated into the Indian legal system. Parliamentary Government was the ideal political arrangement to reconcile liberty with authority, therefore it must be made to work in India. The rule of the majority was an English axiom, and this self-evident principle must also apply to the Indians. This zeal for transplanting everything English to India was a short-sighted policy because it could not, and did not, work (one of the reasons for the partition of India was this imposition of a parliamentary system of Government on a country where majorities and minorities were not political but religious and therefore not temporary but permanent). Of course, the English tried to give to India what they thought was the best, and this redounds to their credit. But it also means that they did not understand India and did not care to find out what could have suited her better. No attempt was made to evolve a system incorporating in itself some English features and some Indian requirements. A few compromises were made under pressure (such as communal representation), but the central objective remained to cast the Indian mind in the English mould and to produce an Indian race which would think and act like the English. When this did not happen, the English were pained and surprised. This suffering could have been

1. In mid-nineteenth century it was a custom among English civil and military officers in India to keep a mistress from whom they also learnt the native tongue. The female sex of the teacher often produced an amusing result. Those who had learnt the language in this pleasant company always referred to themselves in the feminine gender!

avoided by understanding the Indian mind (or minds) and trimming their hopes accordingly.

Human history is a sad testimony to the truth that no people can really enter into the mind of another. Every human group is unique with its own traditions and values, and a perfect understanding between two groups is as rare as that between two individuals. The historian will, therefore, gain nothing by blaming the British and then sitting back to enjoy the strictures. To set the English failure to understand India in proper perspective we must take account of three difficulties under which the British laboured in India.

The harsh Indian climate has shaped Indian history more than is commonly appreciated. Its enervating effect on the Mughuls contributed to their ultimate downfall. The tyranny of the weather has also influenced the Indian social and political temper so that the will to be free rarely overcame the debilitating effect of the seasons. The fact that India has been under foreign rule of one kind or another far longer than most countries is not a mere accident of history: the hot sun was an important accessory to the misfortune.

The British were the first conquerors of India to defeat her climate, and they did this by deciding not to settle down in a country where summer was in full glory when it was yet spring in Europe. Realizing the deleterious effects of tropical habitation and learning a salutary lesson from the fate of their predecessors on the Indian throne, they wisely decided to make it an empire without turning it into a colony. No shiploads came here from England to make a home: it was not considered fit even for the convicted riff-raff of England. In the long run this policy avoided the unhappy aftermath of imperialism which has been so evident in places like Algeria, Rhodesia and Kenya. In the short run it had two opposite effects. On the credit side, it enabled the British to rule a far-flung empire with energy and vigour which remained undiminished because they were replenished by relays of administrators sent from home. On the debit side, it prevented a meeting of English and Indian minds. The Anglo-Indian administrator and soldier was a bird of passage. He looked at the Indians as good or bad material for the army, or as pliable or intransigent stuff on which new administrative theories could be tried, or as primitive children to be brought up and trained in English political habits. There was no social intercourse, no meeting in the bazaar and at home, no friendships, enmities or rivalries which are the stuff of which human relationships are made. Once the decision not to live in India had been taken it

was obvious that an understanding between the two races could not be forthcoming. Those who made the decision did so for other reasons, and could not have calculated its implications for mutual estrangement.[1]

The second difficulty was the British realization that their rule over India was not going to last for ever. Even when the star of imperialism was in the zenith and the common eye foresaw nothing but immortality for the empire, there were, among the British in India, several men perceptive enough to record that one day, howsoever distant, India would have to go free. As time passed and British confidence in their own rule receded a feeling grew that the Indian empire was going to be a mere interlude in British history as well as in the Indian. Of course the time scale proposed by the Anglo-Indians for this inevitable development could not keep pace with the flow of events: few could foresee the speed at which things would be in a tumble or the factors accelerating it. But there is not the slightest doubt that the British in India believed that their stay could not be permanent. Given this conviction, is it surprising that they lacked the will to cultivate the Indians or to try to understand them? This was perhaps short-sighted politics and a wrong kind of imperialism, but it was a normal human reaction to a given situation. One does not try to enter into the minds of one's fellow travellers however long the journey. And this journey was not a particularly long one: in terms of historical time the length of effective British rule in India was a tiny segment of British history and even a smaller fraction of Indian history. In terms of historical significance its place will be determined by the historian of the twenty-fifth century.

It could be said that these two difficulties were of the making of the English themselves. It could be asked, though the question is not a fair one, why they did not decide to settle down in India and live as the Muslims had done. And one could demand, still more unfairly, why they believed that they could not keep India for ever. These are rhetorical questions and will not stay for an answer. There was, however, another handicap for which the British could by no means be held responsible. And that was the Indian reaction to foreign rule.

Indian hostility to everything British was obvious, natural and implacable. Many strands went into the making of it: fear of the unfamiliar, hatred of the weak for the strong, resentment at acknowledging a foreign master, dread of cultural invasion, fear of loss of faith,

1. One of these other reasons was the feeling of racial superiority. The English did not want to be corrupted by a too close contact with the Indians. This point is discussed below.

bitterness at subjection to racial discrimination. This is not the place to analyse this reaction (this is done in the penultimate chapter); what is important is to measure its impact on the British. They had come with high hopes and with elaborate plans to civilize India. The missionaries brought the message of Christ. The administrators were impatient to revolutionise the revenue system and every-day administration. The soldiers came with new weapons, new strategy and new tactics. The doctors brought new drugs and fresh techniques. The engineers dug canals where there were none, cut roads across deserts, built bridges over wide waters, and harnessed nature where it had run wild and untamed for thousands of years. The intellectuals dug up the past, studied ancient languages, examined indigenous faiths, and made a present of their discoveries to the Hindu who was a stranger to his own heritage. English was taught to the native so that he was introduced to the West. Colleges and universities were opened to stretch the intellectual and mental horizons to a point where learning lost its local colour and became universal.

Were the Indians pleased by this? Not a whit. They did not take to the New Civilization as the unsuspecting rulers had hoped. The Indian reaction was one of aloofness, sullenness and perplexity. They could not understand this torrent of strange values, principles and practices. A traditional, static society, itself an amalgam of opposites, was vigorously stirred and there was great confusion. But confusion and incomprehension do not mean acceptance or gratitude. The British had done all this in earnest and were sure that the message of progress would be received with acclamation and perhaps also with some gratitude for those who had lighted the path. When nothing of the sort happened English hopes were soured. The Indians had turned their back on them: this was their answer. The will to understand India did not survive this heart-breaking experience. The book which had been opened with such fervent hope remained closed for ever.

This treatment of Indian reaction and its effect on the British needs a qualification on both sides. When we talk of 'Indian' reaction we mean the reaction of the vocal elements of the population. We do not know what the silent masses were thinking or how the villager (nine out of every ten Indians were villagers) measured the new master. We only know what the educated, influential, well-to-do townsmen said or did. We have no means of calculating the support given by the masses to the views of the vocal minority. On the other side, the statement that British reaction to Indian hostility led to indifference and to a refusal to make any contacts also carries a qualification. The English were only

partly discouraged. Henceforth they showed a strong reserve to those Indians who had expressed disapproval and hostility and opened their hearts (as much as that race is capable of this exercise) to others. This explains the two faces of the Englishman in India which have confused so many people: to the indifferent, placid, acquiescent, open-hearted peasant he offered affection, friendship, even a measure of equality; to the sullen, agitating, vocal, disloyal, subtle lawyer, clerk, journalist and politician he gave his contempt, suspicion and derision. This clears up the paradox of the British refusal to cultivate the educated middle class which was in fact their own creation and their solicitude and partiality for the ignorant masses who remained untouched by the wind of change.

* * * *

This is how the current of British opinion flowed, but it will help in understanding the trend and volume of this current if we look a little more closely at two of its tributaries.

In the nineteenth century two schools of thought appeared in Britain which had great influence on British thinking about India and which determined the imperial outlook for more than a hundred years. One was Utilitarianism, the other Evangelicalism. The eighteenth century European rationalist had a new birth in the Utilitarian who put his trust in utility, reason, common sense and hope. Once the principles of reason and utility were introduced into human affairs, progress was inevitable. He condemned everything which in his calculus stood in the way of the application of his theories: preference, privilege, tradition and custom. These were evils which dragged humanity down to the level of the animal kingdom and made nought of human effort at improvement. The Evangelical, on the other hand, mistrusted the play of reason in religion and revolted against the contemporary looseness in religious thought and practice. He aimed at personal piety and at a high standard of human conduct. The Kingdom of God was to be won through the realm of improved human relations. This humanitarianism dominated the practical side of his life. He stood for an improvement in social legislation and for uncompromising opposition to such things as slave trade. To keep silent in the presence of these evils was to countenance them and thus to offend one's conscience.

It is not difficult to see that, in spite of their contrasting origin, the two schools of thought agreed on their outlook on life. When they came to look at India their reaction was similar not only in content but also in intensity and depth. The Utilitarian was an enemy of tradition and privilege. In India he found both in abundance, and denunciation

burst forth from his lips. His rational values and his hatred of privilege were specially revolted by the spectacle of Hinduism which sanctioned strange ritual and elevated the Brahman beyond the reach of moral responsibility or human touch. His hostility to Islam, less marked but no less real, was aroused partly by practices like polygamy and partly by his own sense of self-righteousness which did not tolerate any attack on Christian teachings or theology. Generally he found India reeking of superstition which stalked the land in the guise of religion. Nothing in India could evoke his admiration except the fact and grace of British rule. Others might have held their peace and taken their theories elsewhere. But not so the Utilitarian; for the second element in his faith was that all evil could be eliminated by righteous effort and proper application of certain principles. His duty lay, therefore, not in closing his eyes or running away, but in actively interfering and trying to set matters right. India was a British responsibility and what better opportunity than this could there be to raise the Indian morality to a semblance of Utilitarian Christianity (or Christian Utility)?

The Evangelical on the Indian scene found even more to make his gorge rise. He saw so much that was repugnant to his Christian upbringing and conventional ethical code that India sank even lower in his estimation than she had in the Utilitarian's. He was horrified by Hindu idolatry and by Islamic unbelief in the Holy Trinity. Full of religious zeal and buoyed up by his imperial status he referred to Hinduism as 'the abomination of heathenism' and to the Muslim as 'infidel' and 'profligate'. Like the Utilitarian, who found the sanction for interference in his duty to eradicate superstition by reason, the Evangelical pointed to his mission to free the heathen from his dark chains and lead him to the true religion of Christ.

The Utilitarian and the Evangelical thus became allies in the cause of saving the soul of the Indian. This was a duty which had to be performed in the interest of the Indians, even if against their will. Of course, much good came out of this approach to India. It was under the goading influence of these two schools of opinion and effort that such abominable practices as child sacrifice, suttee, female infanticide, thugee, slavery and the legal ban on Hindu widow re-marriage were eliminated. But what is equally significant is the role of these schools in creating an unfavourable image of India among the English. By pointing an accusing finger at the darker areas of Indian life and by concentrating attention on them, they moulded a certain British attitude towards India which was devoid of sympathy or respect. This produced the double result to which reference has already been made, *viz.*, a

conscious or unconscious hostility, tinged with contempt, for everything Indian, and consequently a lack of any interest in cultivating the Indians or learning about the working of their mind.

* * * *

Though the official policy of the Government of India was one of religious neutrality and little direct, official and concerted effort was made to spread Christianity in India, yet the fact that the English were a Christian people unmistakably coloured the British imperial outlook. The Christian basis of imperialism was clearly enunciated in the very early years when in the new charter given to the East India Company after the Restoration the Company was allowed to raise fortifications, draft troops and make war on non-Christian powers, princes and principalities. Later this frank and fierce vigour in the service of religion was curbed, at least in official policy and action, but nothing could stop individual administrators and soldiers from expressing their honest views on the desirability and necessity of converting Indians to Christianity. Some ingenious arguments were adduced in support of this contention.

Claudius Buchanan, writing in early nineteenth century in condemnation of Minto's official neutral stand, started from the obvious point that there was nothing to bind the British and Indians or to bring them closer. They differed in everything that mattered in life: law, language, religion, interest, colour of skin, tradition, values, culture, literature. Such a people could only be approached through religion. A long-term plan for the conversion of India ought to form a part of the imperial programme. If this were not done and the difference in the religions of the rulers and their subjects persisted the permanence of imperial power could not be assured.[1]

Several administrators of the nineteenth century were not averse to borrowing Buchanan's ideas and viewing their activities and aims in India in the light of Christian principles. When the Punjab was conquered from the Sikhs and placed under the vigorous but unorthodox rule of the district officers trained in the famous Lawrence school, they found a new frontier land which reminded them of ancient tribal Israel. They used Old Testament language and imagery to describe and justify the relative freedom of action given to the tribes and also the heavy punitive raids inflicted upon them when the tribal game endangered the stability or prestige of imperial rule.

1. Buchanan carried on a persistent war of polemics against what he considered the un-Christian, imprudent and ultimately anti-imperial Indian official policy of neutrality. For his pamphlets which were written to argue his case and to influence opinion at home see the note on books at the end of this volume.

Others went further and believed with the teasing simplicity of the puritan that the Hand of God fashioned their actions and the Will of God guided their arms. Their faith was clear and strong in the future of imperial rule. During the Mutiny the Bishop of Oxford had written that 'God has entrusted India to us to hold it for Him, and we have no right to give it up'.[1] John Lawrence could not understand why people criticised his ardour to pray for rain when prayer was a part of his religion. For him all human effort and superiority were as nothing 'without the support of the everlasting arm of Almighty God'. For Herbert Edwardes there was only one cause of the Mutiny: the English had received Divine chastisement for having refused to extend their Christian faith to the benighted Indians. When this punishment was over and the revolt successfully dealt with, Robert Montgomery declared that it was not policy which had saved them, nor luck, nor courage, but truly 'the Lord our God'. An army officer, who later commanded a regiment of native soldiers in the Mutiny, announced his conviction that 'every converted Christian is expected, or rather commanded, by the Scriptures to make known the glad tidings of salvation to his lost fellow-creatures', and he admitted that he had tried to convert his sepoys to Christianity.[2] More gentle persuasion was employed by the Commissioner of Fatehpur who had, at his own expense, embellished each gate leading into the city with four pillars on which were inscribed, in Urdu and Hindi characters, the Ten Commandments. He spoke with the shade of Asoka.

Sir Alfred Lyall minced no words in airing his views. During the Mutiny he had come to hate the Muslims and this strengthened his belief that Christianity was the only solution of the riddle of India. His biographer, Sir Mortimer Durand, tells us that Lyall often said that 'he hoped to see the expulsion of the Turk from Europe'. During the Mutiny he wrote to his father: 'I am quite well now, and shall start for Delhi tomorrow morning at 4 A.M., in order to enjoy the pleasure of seeing the imperial city of the Mussulmans in ruin'.[3] Sore at the ancient expulsion of Christianity from Egypt, he consoled himself with the thought that 'Moslems can hardly complain if Christianity and civilization are now taking their revanche'.[4] Memory plays strange tricks, and, forgetful of his own earlier views, in 1882 he

1. Sir Richard Congreve, *India: A Pamphlet Published in 1857* (London, 1907), p. 14.
2. Quoted in Philip Woodruff, *The Men who Ruled India* (London, 1953), Vol. I, p. 354.
3. Mortimer Durand, *Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall* (London, 1913), pp. 68, 70. The letter to his father is quoted on the latter page.
Quoted in Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh, 1966), p. 471.

blithely remarked that Christians in India were yet not free from the old spirit 'which included crusading among the solemn duties of a faithful ruler'.[1] At least one Viceroy is on record as having attributed the establishment of the Indian Empire to Divine orders, speaking to a large English-Indian audience at Calcutta on 16 February 1887, on the occasion of the fiftieth year of Queen Victoria's reign, Lord Dufferin said: 'Through the mysterious decrees of Providence, the British nation and its rulers have been called upon to undertake the Supreme Government of this mighty empire...'.[2]

One can go on collecting such quotations, but the above should suffice to indicate the Christian inspiration of the imperial attitude to India. However, an extreme example of seeking Christian sanction for an indefensible act of butchery is provided by Frederic Cooper, the deputy commissioner of Amritsar in 1857. On 13 May a large body of Indian troops at Lahore was disarmed and put under close supervision. But one of them succeeded in killing the English commanding officer of the 26th Native Infantry. Afraid of retribution most of the regiment then fled (those who remained behind were killed by a cannonade aimed at the regiment's lines). Many of the fleers were shot dead by the pursuers or lost their lives in crossing the Ravi. On the other bank the exhausted remnant came face to face with Cooper who led a posse of police. They were captured, herded together into a small room, and then one by one each was brought out and shot dead, the dead bodies being thrown into a disused well. After 237 had thus been executed the police told Cooper that the rest rufused to come out. When the deputy commissioner went to investigate and the doors of the tiny prison were opened 45 men lay dead from heat, exhaustion, suffocation and fright.

The Mutiny witnessed much horror and senseless butchery on both sides. When people lose their sense of proportion and go wild with anger humanity is the first casualty. Cooper's action in despatching these soldiers without a court martial or any other legal proceeding does not, therefore call for a special stricture. What is frightening is the pride, patriotic fervour and Christian satisfaction with which he later recounted the incident. After telling the story of this cold-blooded murder truthfully and in detail, he goes on : 'The above account, written by the principal actor in the scene himself, might read strangely

1. A.C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies* (London, 1882), p. 243.
2. *Speeches Delivered in India, 1884-8 by the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava* (London, 1890), p. 160

at home: a single Anglo-Saxon, supported by a section of Asiatics, undertaking so tremendous a responsibility, and coldly presiding over so memorable an execution, without the excitement of a battle, or a sense of individual injury, to imbue the proceedings with the faintest hue of vindictiveness.' He was convinced 'that wisdom and heroism are still but mere dross before the manifest and wondrous interposition of Almighty God in the cause of Christianity'.[1] He would have heartily agreed with the maxim of another Englishman, a man of religion, Canon Scrine, who said that 'war is not murder, but sacrifice; which is the soul of Christianity'.[2] But Cooper's action was not even war; it was plain murder.

It is easy to see why Christianity was always quoted in support of imperialism. Christians believed that their faith was the vanguard of human progress. Imperialists were convinced that imperialism was the instrument through which the message of progress could be transmitted to the 'uncivilized' world. Christianity thus came to be seen as a handmaiden of imperial rule, or perhaps the other way round. Gladstone, whose faith in Christianity was firm and whose imperial feeling was not clouded by his 'liberal' affiliation, echoed this thought : 'I see that for the last fifteen hundred years Christianity has always marched in the van of all human improvement'.[3]

Gladstone and those who quoted him with approval did not choose to recall the European dark ages when for several centuries Christianity and human progress had parted company. This was bad history, but those who build an empire do not seek the truth. It was enough to believe that Christianity meant progress.[4] Paradoxically, it also meant for some Anglo-Indians that the spread of Christianity in India would conduce to the stability of British rule. The argument was that once Indians became Christians they would, in some vague way, come closer to the Europeans and therefore cease to resent foreign rule. The new

1. Quoted in Robert A. Huttenback, *The British Imperial Experience* (New York and London, 1966), pp. 64-65.
2. Quoted in a book review by W. G. Runciman in *The Listener*, 10 August 1967, p. 182.
3. Quoted in *The Lands of Islam* (pamphlet no. 4 in the series "Papers for Thoughtful Muslims") published by the Christian Literature Society for India, London and Madras, 1897.
4. Bishop Heber went even further and claimed that, once converted to Christianity, Indians would surpass even the best Europeans in virtue. Faults in Indian character, he wrote, 'seem to arise from the hateful superstitions to which they are subject, and the unfavourable state of society in which they are placed. But if it should please God to make any considerable portion of them Christian, they would I can well believe put the best of European Christians to shame'. Letter to Charles Wynn, of 1 March 1825, quoted in Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India* (London, 1829), Vol, III, p. 333.

religion would make them a part of the West, and they would no longer feel that they were being ruled by an alien people. After the mutiny at Vellore in 1807 Edward Parry, a member of the Board of Control, wrote to Minto, the Governor General, 'If the sepoys of Vellore had been Christians they would not have conspired to restore a Mahomedan Power on our ruins. Nor would Christianity raise the Natives to the assertion of a free Government or of Independence. The energy and boldness necessary for Achievements of this sort do not belong to the Asiatic Character.'[1]

The logic of this thought is far from impeccable and the argument bristles with contradictions. The Indians were not fit even to think of or plan for independence. They were backward. Christianity would make them progressive. But it would also make them more amenable to foreign rule. To be a Christian was to be loyal to British domination. Christianity was a force for progress, but it turned men away from thoughts of independence (and therefore self-respect). Did this mean that Christianity was good for the West on both counts: it made the West progressive and free and it made the East more subservient to the West and less critical of Western expansion? Would conversion mean that the East would accept the superiority of the West from where the new message came and therefore give ready submission to Western rule which saved their souls even if it enslaved their bodies? To pick these holes is not to question the sincerity with which the British held Christianity to be a part of their superior equipment, but to emphasize the tenacity with which they used their religion to justify and advance imperialism.

The way in which Christianity was to be put to this use led to difficulties. The missionary bodies in India and their supporters at home clamoured for a clear-cut and forceful policy of refusing to give official countenance to Indian religions[2] and of undertaking a vast and serious programme of proselytisation. Their first demand was met when the official machinery withdrew recognition of Indian religions, and a Christian Memorial to Queen Victoria in 1858 gratefully acknowledged that 'the voice of Christian men prevailed'. But the second

1. Edward Parry to Minto, 15 June 1807, *Minto Papers* (National Library of Scotland), quoted in Norman Danial, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
2. At least one Anglo-Indian shared these views and had the courage of his convictions. Sir Peregrine Maitland, the Madras commander-in-chief, resigned in protest against the Government's association with such rites as the Cocoanut Festival at Surat. For the Minute of 1 April 1837 which Lord Auckland, the Governor General, wrote on this occasion see *Parliamentary Papers* (*H.C.*), *Returns, 12 February, 1858, "East India"* (*Sir Peregrine Maitland*), p. 6.

demand was never conceded. Instead of putting the Governmental machinery at the disposal of the missionary effort at conversion, the Government adopted and persisted in a policy of neutrality.

Here the officials and the missionaries clashed. The missionary arguments were that it was the duty of the imperial power to convert the subject races from their 'evil religions', that such conversions would facilitate the task of the rulers, that with all Indians believing in the faith of the rulers British rule would take on a perpetual lease, that no progress or improvement (the professed aims of the rulers) would be effected without conversion, and that the continuance of local religions would be a permanent source of disloyalty among Indians and of inspiration for political independence. The administrators replied with a different set of arguments: conversion of such a large body of people was impracticable, any official attempt at undermining Indian religions would lead to widespread resentment and considering the sensitive character of religious feeling probably to a general revolt, and anyway the officials had already too many tasks and responsibilities on their hands to find the time and effort required for mounting a proselytising campaign. Thus the battle went on between Serampore (then the centre of missionary organisations) and Calcutta (then the capital of British India).

It is true that the final outcome was the official policy of neutrality, but policy and opinion do not always coincide. The officials adopted neutrality more as an expediency than out of respect for Indian religions. Few Anglo-Indians understood or admired local faiths. Most of them were hostile to what they considered Hindu superstition and Islamic fanaticism. Minto, even while he was resisting missionary pressure and formulating the declaration on neutrality, was telling Parry that the Government of India actually desired to see Christianity established in India. There is nothing unnatural in such wishes, expressed privately by individual Anglo-Indians or by administrators in official papers. Their Christian faith and training pulled them one way, their responsibilities as administrators of a vast empire dictated a different policy. The policy was adopted, but that did not influence their private opinion. The basic conflict remained: the missionaries stood for conversion, the administrators decided in favour of toleration.

A study of this tug of war leads to several interesting lines of thought. Why did the administrator oppose the missionary demands for large-scale conversion? One reason is apparent. His responsibility as a man entrusted to run the empire brought home the difficulties of adopting a one-sided religious attitude. The administrator values

stability and law and order above everything else. The slightest threat to peace is a nightmare to his official conscience. It was obvious that once the Indians, to whom religion was very close to life, came to believe that the government was trying to rob them of their faith they would resist British rule by every means open to them. Another reason was the official's strong imperial feeling. He was a Christian, but even more than that he was an imperialist. For him the efficient running and expansion of empire took priority over converting a few million 'primitive' people to Christianity. How much more exciting and rewarding was the conquest of a province or the transformation of a district than the preaching of the Gospel? He might also have thought that a good and just administration was more likely to attract Indians to Christianity than the intemperate preaching of the missionaries. Another factor was the official lack of interest in religion. Primarily a soldier or an administrator, he was only slightly acquainted with his own religion and hardly at all with those of the Indians. He did not really care about this war of faiths and devoted his energies to administering to the needs of the only mistress he knew—the empire.

The secular approach of the administrator may also have had something to do with his classical education. It has not been generally recognised, even by Englishmen themselves, that a good majority of the Anglo-Indians had read classics at some British university, more often at Oxford or Cambridge. In the nineteenth-century Oxford the classical course called *Literae Humaniores* (Humane Letters) was the main course of education. The student studied the classical antiquity in depth and then extended his inquiry into the present. The pursuit of this kind of course developed three qualities in him. The study of ancient literature and its social setting trained him to understand and appreciate a world like his own. The study of ancient history enabled him to arrange and interpret historical facts and to view a different age with sympathy. The study of ancient philosophy introduced him to the discipline of abstract thinking and to the need of at least trying to see the other man's point of view. In short, it made a full man and developed a whole range of faculties and sensibilities. With this rich mental and intellectual training behind him it was difficult for the Anglo-Indian administrator to accept without question the missionary's emotional appeal. There *may* be something good in the Indian religions. The spirit of inquiry and the habit of tolerating the unfamiliar, which had been inculcated by classical education, saved the administrator from hasty action and blind prejudice and ultimately from a surrender to the missionary.

There could be no two opinions about the wisdom of adopting the policy of neutrality. It saved the Indian empire from many pitfalls and perhaps from disaster. It protected the Indians from an officially-staged exposure to missionary preaching. Yet it could not prevent or curb missionary activities in India. Given the Christian belief of the rulers this was inevitable. And it may be that official religious neutrality encouraged the missionaries to greater activity by depriving them of official support: as nothing was expected from the government there was greater need to exert to uphold the Church of Christ. No policy is perfect in design or effect and on the whole India gained from neutrality. It did not have to face anything like what contemporary Uganda and southern Sudan were experiencing.

Every movement has its weak and strong points. While the Indian missionaries were insisting on whole-sale conversion and condemning neutrality as a compromise with evil, they were also doing much good by their educational and philanthropic undertakings. Schools and colleges spread education where government enterprise was absent or weak. Mission hospitals brought health and comfort to many who had no money to pay for the medicine. The impact of Christianity on the social life of India, particularly among the Hindus, was on the whole happy. Many dark practices of Hindu society were eliminated partly under missionary initiative.

Many Indians appreciated these achievements, and the low-caste Hindus who embraced Christianity must have found a freedom and a dignity which had never been theirs. But what confused some Indians and created suspicion in their mind was what they saw of English life in India. In practical life the English were hardly Christian. In the outward form of religion they were lax. The Sunday church-going was more of a social function than religious devotion. At the time of Sir Eyre Coote's funeral the Madras church was found to be full of rice bags and had to be cleared for the ceremony. It also irked the Indians to see that the missionaries were coming to India to instruct them in religion at a time when their own nation (the British) was increasingly forsaking faith and becoming pagan. This feeling grew with time and the more the West became secular and 'modern' the greater the Indian's doubts in the missionary's sincerity of purpose. Why should he leave the faith of his ancestors and believe in Christianity when the white people themselves were discarding it?

* * * *

The statement that the British were generally unsympathetic to

Indian religions should not be taken to mean that they condemned every religion with equal impartiality or vehemence. Their different attitudes towards Hinduism and Islam make an interesting study in the approach of a Western religion-*cum*-culture to the religions-*cum*-cultures of the East.

Hinduism stood low in British estimation, partly because of its utter unfamiliarity, partly because of the several social evils which then prevailed in Hindu society and carried direct or indirect religious sanction, and partly because the West saw it and Islam working side by side and inevitably compared them to each other and on the whole preferred Islam. Except for twenty or thirty years following the Mutiny, when the Muslims were under a cloud for their alleged instigation of the revolt, there was a general undercurrent of hostility to Hinduism. Pre-Mutiny British studies of India abound in horrified references to Hindu social and religious practices which had shocked Western sensibility. It is noticeable that, apart from some unfavourable mention of polygamy among the Muslims, this list of evil practices was exclusively Hindu: suttee or the burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands, killing of girls in infancy to avoid the dishonour of letting an outsider marry one's daughter, murdering of old people by burying them in suffocating mud, sacrificing human beings for propitiating goddesses carved in stone, worshipping of trees and stars and rivers, calling the cow 'mother' and treating it as a minor deity, and so on.

Besides the dislike for a religion which upheld and sanctified what the British thought to be nothing more than silly superstition or plain nonsense, two other factors seem to have influenced their opinion. They found the Hindu completely ignorant of his own history and, themselves being a people with a finely-developed historical sense, this they found appalling. To claim to belong to such an ancient religion and to be so indifferent to its past was an unpardonable intellectual crime in the eyes of the British who were accustomed to record and examine the smallest change in the fortunes of their nation and whose sense of history had recently been given a still finer edge by imperial expansion. The second factor is even more simple to grasp. Even those among the English in India whose interest in history was lukewarm could see that for hundreds of years the Hindu, in spite of his three-fourths majority in the land, had been ruled by the foreign Muslim minority with whom he had nothing in common. The Englishman's love of freedom (his own freedom of course) was legendary, and the spectacle of a vast mass of inert humanity quietly acquiescing in foreign rule convinced him that such people did not deserve sympathy or respect.

This uncompromising dislike of the Hindu prevailed until the Mutiny. Then the scales were turned and things were never the same again. It began with the British belief that the Mutiny had been engineered by the Muslims alone. For several years official wrath fell upon them and by contrast the Hindus were taken to be a peace-loving people who quickly learnt the ways of the rulers and gave them no trouble. Though later British historians themselves revised their opinion on Muslim involvement in the uprising and the government accordingly modified their hostility, yet the damage had been done and the Muslim image tarnished in British eyes. The stigma of disloyalty might gradually have disappeared and former good opinion reasserted itself, but then a fresh development changed the entire scene. With the establishment of the Indian National Congress and the beginning of political agitation more and more attention was given to those who opposed British rule and demanded independence. On this point British opinion bifurcates. The attitude in Britain was by and large favourable to the Hindu nationalists, especially among the Liberals and the Socialists, who always accepted the Congress claim to speak for all Indians. The attitude of the Anglo Indians, on the other hand, was unfavourable to the Congress, partly because they were running India and disliked subversion and partly because they knew that the Muslims stood outside the Congress and therefore it could not rightly claim to speak for India. Opinion in India was evidently closer to facts than opinion at home, but this did not prevent the introduction of an anti-Muslim bias in British opinion as a whole which argued that the Muslims were a stubborn, reactionary people who stood in the way of Indian independence. This attitude gained strength as the partition of India drew nearer and led to the powerful British disapproval of the creation of Pakistan and the independence of Indian Muslims. This was, however, a purely political reaction and did not necessarily reflect a change in British attitude to Hinduism; though in practical terms the accident of the British Labour Party being in office in 1947 was no less than a disaster for the Muslims.

In contrast to Hinduism, Islam had long been familiar to the West as a religion and as a culture. For centuries before the coming of the British to India Muslims were the only foreign people known to the West. Muslim civilization was also closer to the Western in many ways. Islamic learning was respected in European universities and its influence on Western thought was freely acknowledged. Further, the British controlled several other Muslim lands and were therefore well acquainted with different shades of Muslim character and tradition. When they c

to India, therefore, they tended to judge the Hindus by the standard of their experience of the Muslims. For about a hundred years their judgment favoured the sons of Islam.

It is interesting to recall that Burke answered Warren Hastings's explanation of his conduct in India with an argument from Islam. Hastings had pleaded that he had done his best under the Indian conditions and that British standards of administration and legality should not be expected to prevail in India. Burke retorted that by ruling India as an 'oriental despot' Hastings in fact had gone against the current of Islamic tradition wherein the strictest constitutional limitations were put on the sovereign power. And then he proceeded to admire the Mughuls and their system of governance.[1]

James Mill the Utilitarian, in his *History of British India*, was less enthusiastic than Burke but equally sympathetic to Islam. For him Muslim rule in India had been a vast improvement on the earlier Hindu state and bore some kind of approximation to contemporary British rule. By uniting their rule with the interests of the Indian people the Mughuls had established a Government which was more native than foreign. Comparing Muslims and Hindus, he found the former in possession of several virtues—manliness, independence, equality, courage—which made them like 'our own half-civilized ancestors'. At the same time Mill recorded that the Muslim was not liked by the British ruler in India who wanted to have nothing to do with him except to receive his obedience.[2] It is a significant measure of the change in British opinion that when Mill's *History* was brought out in a new edition in 1840 by Wilson, the editor, in his continuation, made it plain that he was unwilling to accept Mill's compliments to Muslims.[3] Reginald Heber, the second Bishop of Calcutta, was another Englishman who was impressed by the Muslims. Writing in 1825, and comparing them with the Hindus, he found them 'a better people' and called their religion 'a far better creed'. In the grace and dignity of demeanour they outshone Hindus.[4]

But favourable judgment did not monopolize the field of opinion. There were people who did not like Islam and the Muslims, particularly in the Indian context. One reason, generally given by the Anglo-Indians, was the fear that Muslims, more than other Indians, would never accept

1. Edmund Burke, *The Works and Correspondence* (London, 1852), see Vol. VI.
2. James Mill, *The History of British India* (London, 1817), Vol. 2, Book III.
3. *Ibid.*, with notes and continuation by H. H. Wilson (4th ed., London, 1840-48), Vol. 2, Book III.
4. Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey...* (London, 3rd. ed., 1828), Vol. III, pp. 295, 356.

British rule as long as they remained attached to their faith. It is not clear whether this conviction grew out of the nature of Islam which emphasized independence and self-respect or out of the fact that British rule had overthrown a Muslim power in India; but the latter argument is more often adduced in support of Muslim resentment. A major step towards the safe establishment of British dominion would be the conversion of all Indians, and particularly Muslims, to Christianity.[1] A general criticism of Islam was that it embodied 'oriental despotism'. This was the main point made by Macaulay in his essay on Clive. In that on Warren Hastings he made the startling comment that the Governor General's taste had been corrupted by his love for Persian literature. On the whole Macaulay was impartial in his strictures on all Indian religions and found it useless to make distinctions among 'barbarian' faiths.[2]

Later developments in the British attitude towards Islam and the Muslims have already been sketched above. On the whole, the Anglo-Indians were better disposed towards the Muslims, particularly if they had spent long periods in Muslim provinces or in areas like Delhi and the United Provinces where Muslim culture was still flourishing. By contrast opinion at home was divided and followed party lines. The conservatives and their supporters were more inclined to appreciate the Muslim predicament and to frown upon Congress demands which, if met, would have turned the Muslims into a permanent, powerless minority. Most of the Liberals and the entire body of Socialists stood firm in their support of whatever the Congress desired and dismissed Muslim fears as reaction and official disapproval as repression. These attitudes were adopted when the first stirring of politics quickened India towards the end of the nineteenth century and soon froze into a hard mould so that there was virtually no change in the two views till the last years of British rule.[3]

But in spite of a general Anglo-Indian sympathy for the Muslims it is difficult to affirm that the administrators and soldiers were well acquainted with Islam and Muslim civilization. For example, apart from a few exceptions, they were not conscious of the fact that Muslims

1. This feeling was shared by several Anglo-Indians and almost all missionaries. For a good example see C. Buchanan, *Memoir of the Ecclesiastical Establishment for India* (London, 1805), Part I, Chapter iv, Part II, Chapters i and ii. He repeated such views in his other works cited in the note on books at the end of this volume.
2. T. B. Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays* (London, any ed.), essays on Robert Clive and Warren Hastings.
3. For a detailed account of the period after 1857 see my *Britain and Muslim India: A Study of British Public Opinion vis-a vis the Development of Muslim Nationalism in India 1857-1947* (London, 1963), which takes notice of British attitudes and of Anglo-Indian opinion.

regarded them as a people of the Book and hence closer to themselves than the Hindus, and that therefore they expected a better understanding of the Muslim case and a better treatment from individual Englishmen as well as the Government. To realize this required some knowledge of Islam which was rarely acquired. On the other hand, even those Anglo-Indians who claimed to be knowledgeable friends accused the Muslims of religious fanaticism without citing supporting evidence. But this was not a view born of their Indian experience but stemmed from their Western tradition in which a general impression of this nature had long been, and still is, current.

Viewed in the larger context of the imperial movement as a whole these pitfalls have no great significance. What is important, however, is another surprising weakness in British imperial approach to Islam. The British Empire was the greatest Muslim empire of its time in the sense that it counted within its borders a majority of the Muslims of the world. This brought the British in close and long contact with Islam which should have led to better understanding. But Islamic scholarship in Britain was poor in proportion to the opportunity offered. In the last hundred years more and better work on Islam has been done on the Continent (particularly in France and Italy) than in Britain. Moreover, in much of British scholarship there is much bias or frank disapproval. The works of Sir William Muir, Margoliouth, R. Bell and a host of lesser men, and translations of the Quran by George Sale, Rodwell and Palmer, illustrate this. Only a few names vindicate the honour of English academic learning—Thomas Arnold in religious studies, and Nicholson, Browne and Arberry in literature. On the contrary, such European scholars as Bausani, Dozy, Goldziher, Massignon and von Kremer have produced work of higher quality and greater objectivity. Not a single journal on Islam is issued by the British. No British university maintains or has ever maintained a reputable centre of Islamic studies: the bulk of the work done at Edinburgh or published by its press is in the tradition of Muir.

How can we explain this British lack of interest in Islam? Some reasons occur to mind at once and in fact form part of the imperial tradition which we have been examining in the foregoing pages. The British had an inordinate sense of superiority as imperial rulers and regarded subject races, civilizations and cultures beneath the dignity of attention. Islam was an 'oriental' religion, and till today anything bearing that appellation is suspect in Western eyes (this, however, did not keep away the French, the Italians and the Germans from studying

it). The strong Christian feeling in Britain, which contributed to making the Victorian age what it was, discouraged interest in Islam in two ways: Christianity was superior to Islam as a religion and therefore to study an inferior religious system was a waste of time; Christianity and Islam were both rivals for the spiritual allegiance of mankind and this introduced a political fervour into the religious conflict (this second factor could also have worked in the opposite direction and encouraged the British to look closely at a religion which they were trying to defeat in its proselytising efforts, but it did not). The British incapacity to enter into the minds of other people, to which reference has already been made, was a further obstacle. The Hinduism-Islam contrast in India suggests another reason for the British failure. Hinduism had to be discovered by the West, particularly by the British, and the excitement of a new discovery is a potent incentive to all scholars. Max Muller's distinguished achievements in Hindu research were due to this general tendency towards investigating a civilization which was buried deep under ignorance and which had recently been brought to British notice by their conquest of India. Islam offered no such prospects of a voyage of discovery. Its origins, history and achievements were generally known to the West. The scholarly mind is rarely excited by the familiar. Still another reason might have been the difficulty of learning a new language. We have already seen the general British reluctance to pick up foreign tongues. No worthwhile work on Islam was possible without a good command of Arabic, which is not only a difficult language to learn for a Westerner but was also the language of a subject race in the British empire. Further, British imperialism was strongly imbued with racial feeling, while French imperialism was not. Probably this is another explanation of the difference between British and French Islamic scholarship.

Whatever the reasons may be, and the question is still open to speculation, it is a misfortune that British scholars, reputed for their historical interest, spirit of curiosity and felicity of pen, wasted this opportunity of enriching their literature with serious and lasting work on Islam. It was not their loss alone for learning is the common property of mankind.

CHAPTER 8

# The Imperial Outlook : II

If Christianity created a spiritual divide between the British and the Indians, racial feeling added social barriers of its own. In spite of many private efforts to proselytise India there is no doubt that Christianity was considered very much the religion of the West and therefore of the white man The Indian who embraced the ruler's faith did by no means raise himself to the level of the Englishman. Pride of faith marched hand in hand with pride of race.

It has often been argued that in the eighteenth century, and also in the early years of the nineteenth, racial feeling did not exist and the British and the Indian met on equal footing.[1] This impression has been strengthened by novels depicting the society of those years. But they were written after the period was over. And contemporary memoirs, journals and letters tell a different tale. It is true that racial feeling was not as blatant as it became later. It is also true that several inter-racial marriages took place and Indians and Englishmen met socially for entertainment. But all reports show a current of constraint in these get-togethers. There was no equality, no informality and certainly no friendship. Mixing with Indians was not openly condemned, but nor was it much commended. The newcomer was perhaps a little more free with his invitations and for a time curiosity vanquished aloofness. But familiarity with the Indian on the one hand and conformity to the

1. Among modern historians Percival Spear is the best exponent of this school of thought. See his *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in the Eighteenth Century India*, Oxford University Press, London, first published 1932, issued in paperback 1963.

practice of his own people on the other soon taught him that dignity, prudence and perhaps safety too lay in keeping oneself to one's own racial group.

Henry Roberdeau came to India in 1799 and died in service in Bengal in 1808. He writes of his experience with the natives. 'The natives of every caste are in their manners and customs so totally different from us that beyond what duty and business compels we can have no association. I believe they privately look on us with a great deal of contempt and generally believe us to be wanting in Religion, merely I suppose because we have not the idle and superstitious outward forms of worship which they so much pride themselves in.... You are aware that the Natives will not eat or drink with us nor partake of anything from our Tables; do not therefore imagine any black faces at our Dinners.'[1]

Bishop Heber in his *Journal* often complains of the 'exclusive and intolerant spirit' of the English and of their 'foolish surly national pride'. '...we shut out the natives from our society and a bullying insolent manner is continually assumed in speaking to them'. Victor Jacquemont, a contemporary French traveller, confirms Heber's findings when he notices that the English 'despise the coloured races too much to be flattered by their homage'. As the century advanced in years the contempt for the Indian grew. In his *Notes on Indian Affairs* (1837) Sir John Shore, who had served long in India, says that on several occasions he heard his young officers using such phrases as 'I hate the natives' or 'I like to beat a black fellow'.

If it be said that this racial feeling was born of lack of education (the English 'tommy' was ill educated) or of narrow training (the Anglo-Indian came straight from England to the country he was to rule), there are people who disprove the argument. Sir Richard Burton was an explorer of legendary fame, a man who visited many lands and mixed with all varieties of people. He spoke several oriental languages with much proficiency and translated the One Thousand and One Nights into English. Such a life ought to have broadened his mind and killed all racial prejudice. But no. The spell of racial superiority held him in thrall as it did any Yorkshire village lad who came to India to fight the English wars. Burton 'became "convinced that the natives of India cannot respect a European who mixes with them familiarly, or especially imitates their customs, manners and dress". He believed the

1. His sketch was first published in *Bengal, Past and Present*, January-June 1925; and is quoted extensively in Philip Woodruff, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 163-166.

Englishman with his authoritative voice, nonchalant manners and broken Hindustani dealt with such people properly in a way "which learning and honesty, which wit and courage, have not. This is to them the master's attitude: they bend to it". As for himself: "Even the experiment of associating with them is almost too hard to bear".'[1] It is impossible to accuse Burton of hypocrisy. Another man who also served his time in Sind and founded a city to immortalise his name was no less forthright in his opinions. 'We hold India, then', wrote John Jacob, 'by being in reality, as in reputation, a superior race to the Asiatic; and if this natural superiority did not exist, we should not, and could not, retain the country for one week.... Away, then, with the assumption of equality; and let us accept our true position of a dominant race.'[2]

It was in the years immediately preceding the Mutiny that the word 'nigger' first appeared in 'descent' Anglo-Indian society.[3] Obviously such a word could have been used only in a society from which Indians were completely banished. This is testimony enough against the contention that all was well in British-Indian relations before the Mutiny.

The Mutiny was, of course, bound to deepen this prejudice. How could it fail to aggravate the already unsatisfactory situation? The threat to the Englishman's security and the brutalities (committed by both sides) carried his racial feeling to its heights (or was it depths!). Already he had a healthy contempt for the Indian; now he added to it an unhealthy hatred—unhealthy because it had an element of fear aroused by the memory of Cawnpore and other places where revenge had outstripped humanity. So racial barriers were raised still higher and the rulers and the ruled lived in two separate worlds and mutual contact was severely limited to official intercourse and formal dealings. Human memory is tenacious and does not easily forget what it does not want to forget. It was many years before the pall of suspicion and distrust lifted, and for some it did not lift at all.

Even the opening of the twentieth century (which was in fact the beginning of the end of imperialism—but it is perhaps well that man cannot see the future) had not brought much change. Old stereotypes

1. Byron Farwell, *Burton: A Biography of Sir Richard Francis Burton* (London, 1963), p. 46. Burton served in Sind in 1842-48.
2. Lewis Pelly (ed.), *The Views and Opinions of Brigadier-General John Jacob, C.B.* (London, 1858), p. 2. He founded the Sindhi town of Jacobabad, reputed to be the hottest place in the sub-continent.
3. G. O. Trevelyan, *Cawnpore* (London, 1910), p. 36.

lingered and men still swore by the oaths of their fathers and grandfathers. In November 1904 a fresh civilian touched Port Said on his way to India and, even before reaching his domain, his first sight of the oriental wrung these words out of his lips: 'the natives look so revolting'. In India one full year had gone before this ruler over Indians had his first talk with an educated Indian, and 'even then it came by chance'. An elderly Englishman warned him that the English and Indians could never meet as equals. This, he writes, was 'a very common view in those days, and for many years to come'.[1]

When the Prince of Wales, the future King George V, toured India in the following year the same state of affairs met the royal glance. 'I could not help being struck', he wrote, 'by the way in which all salutations by the Natives were disregarded by the persons to whom they were given. Evidently we are too much inclined to look upon them as a conquered and down trodden race and the Native, who is becoming more and more educated, realizes this. I could not help noticing that the general bearing of the European towards the Native was to say the least unsympathetic. In fact not the same as that of superiors to inferiors at home.'[2]

It is easy to pile evidence on evidence to show that there never was a golden age when the Englishman was not conscious of the superiority of his race and the colour of his skin and did not let this consciousness determine his relations with Indians. It was common practice to refer to the Indians in terms like 'nigger', 'blacky' and 'black', and at least one vicerine is said to have called her coachman a 'negro', though this was in her green years when she did not know that all non-white men were not negroes. What is even more important is that the word 'Indian' came to have a clearly pejorative and commonly understood connotation in English usage. To call someone an 'Indian' was in Britain almost an abuse, a way of conveying intense dislike and limitless contempt. Several popular novelists put the word to effective use and by so doing created and strengthened a stereotype which gained universal currency and raised no eyebrows. Even a talented artist like Charlotte Bronte, by no means a writer of 'shockers', described a character in one of her best-known novels, *Jane Eyre*, in these words: 'This child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a Christian heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before the Jug-

1. Malcolm Darling, *Apprentice to Power: India 1904-1908* (London 1966), pp. 13, 38-39.
2. Prince of Wales's notes on his Indian tour of 1905-06, quoted in Sir Harold Nicolson, *King George V: His Life and Reign* (London, 1952), p. 88.

gernaute – this girl is – a liar!' That does not mean that Bronte and other literary persons were racialists. The point is that a certain image of the Indian had entered the English vocabulary and thus become a part of English thinking. What is worse is that such a prejudice was at work even in academic places of distinction. Oxford colleges were not happy to admit Indian students and often did so under pressure from the Colonial and India Offices. And even Whitehall could not force the Trinity to receive black students; till the 1920's its president, Reverend H. E. D. Blakiston, took pride in his all-white college.[1]

Too much has been read into the incidence of mixed marriages in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There are examples of Englishmen marrying Indian women of good connections. Hearsey and Gardiner married the Begums of Cambay who were remotely connected to the Mughul line. James Skinner was the son of a Company officer and a Rajput lady. Sir Robert Warburton's mother belonged to the royal Afghan house. Less formal sexual liaisons abounded. In Burma particularly some officers and traders made it a custom to have young Burmese women as permanent companions. This emotional interest in dusky beauty produced two things: a double phrase and a mixed race. Indian women to whom the English were attracted were often referred to as 'black velvet'. You are fond of black velvet meant that the interest of your heart lay in the Easterly direction. The casual liaison also produced the unhappy race of Eurasians (or Anglo-Indians in the racial sense) whom someone has picturesquely but uncharitably described as 'the ethnic sediment deposited in the tidal wake of British occupation of India'.

But this emotional attachment, whether it ended in holy matrimony or in more or less permanent liaison or in a mere casual affair, was the exception rather than the rule. Anyway a few hundred wives and keeps could not affect the general attitude. Living with one Indian woman neither makes one love the whole of her race nor shakes one's pride in one's own race. These were stray occurrences, not even straws in the wind.

Even this sexual mixing was hedged in by several factors which detract from its importance and utility as a bridge between the races. In most cases the Indian wife did not share her English husband's quarters. She lived in the *zenana* which was a set of rooms separated from the main bungalow by a narrow roofed and paved alleyway. (The

1. C. M. Bowra, *Memories, 1898-1939* (London, 1966), p. 337.

*zenana* of an Indian household was not separated from the house but merely given greater privacy by situating it behind the sitting and dining rooms: the Indian lived in a house, not a bungalow, and there was no segregation of rooms or quarters). The obvious implication was that the Englishman had done something not quite proper and the cause of his indiscretion should be hidden from all visitors. The dusky children played behind the bungalow and were very rarely shown to the sahib's English friends. Nor were these children well provided for. There are many cases where after the father's death the family was left to fend for itself without any assistance or sympathy from his relatives and friends or from the local English community. There seems to be no case on record of an Englishman bringing his Indian wife and children to England and getting them accepted by his relations and neighbours. It is not without significance that when Sir John Kaye wrote his biography of Sir Charles Metcalfe he conscientiously recorded every Indian achievement of his hero but suppressed all reference to his Indian wife and three sons, though one of these boys later became so well-known as to get an entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.[1]

Racialism in any form is reprehensible. And the British who practised it in India along with those at home who applauded them cannot escape their responsibility in the deterioration of British-Indian relations. But before an edict of unqualified condemnation goes forth it is prudent for the historian to recall certain facts.

First of all it must be remembered that all the British in India did not look down upon the Indians as something only a little above the animal kingdom. The social feeling was the strongest in non-official Anglo-India. The traders and the planters were in many ways more imperial minded than the civilians and the soldiers. They combined the *hubris* of the foreigner with the avarice of the man of business, and humanity often struggled in vain against this combination. Among the official class it was generally the lower echelons whose conduct was deplorable. Lack of good education, an ordinary or no family background and the small man's over-consciousness of authority, were responsible for this. On the whole, the civilian had little of such feeling or could suppress it with success, for no district officer could have done his work for a week if he had put himself on a pedestal and asked the populace to bow their knee to him from a distance. Memoirs of virtually all district officers speak with affection of their *mofussil* life

1. See Edward Thompson, *The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe* (London, 1937), pp. x-xi.

and the unalloyed pleasure which contact with the simple peasant brought them. It is a fact which comes out in all Anglo-Indian writings that racial feeling was generally an urban phenomenon. The Englishman reserved his contempt for the educated, politically inclined townsman. And here the colour of the skin was only one explanation. Actually it was the threat to the stability and security of British rule which exacerbated mutual relations. Race added to the difficulties but it was not the only culprit.

To be conscious of one's weaknesses is strength, for the knowledge of one's faults opens a prospect for their removal. Throughout this period there have been people who knew of the existence of this evil and realized that it would one day bring disaster. In 1868 Sir Charles Dilke, himself cast in the mould of high imperialism, warned his readers: 'That our administration is already perfect can hardly be contended so long as no officer not very high in our Indian service dares to call a native a "friend". The first of all our cares must be the social treatment of the people; for while by the Queen's proclamation the natives are our fellow-subjects, they are in practice not yet treated as our fellow-men.'[1] More than half a century later Sir Norman Angell, the disappointed prophet of a world federation, repeated the same warning in more urgent accents. He was convinced that if Britain lost India it would not be because of a failure in dealing out political or economic justice but because of 'the caddishness of a certain British tradition, an attitude in dealing with natives'.[2] Professor Sir Denis Brogan is the last of these influential Englishmen to bemoan what he has called the Anglo-Saxon colour prejudice. He ascribes it in part to the public school training which teaches a division of the world into gentlemen and others. The dread of letting down one's side also bred social exclusiveness and kept the Indians out of English circles. The Englishwoman in India increased this social tension. The hope that the strong Irish contingent in the Indian Civil Service would hold the storm was not realized: their intellectual brutality did as much harm as the Englishmen's snobbish brutality. 'An Irishman saying "You're a damned fool" was really no improvement on an Englishman thinking

1. C. W. Dilke, *Greater Britain* (London, 1868), Vol. II, p. 389. It is a little curious that in spite of his disapproval of the nature of contemporary British-Indian relations he advocated a permanent British settlement in India, *ibid.*, p. 449. Perhaps he thought that the presence of a large number of permanent settlers would improve the tone of mixed social life.

2. Norman Angell, *The Unseen Assassins* (London, 1932), p. 221. Note the inverted commas around 'natives'; that in itself speaks for a change in the reference to Indians.

"You're an outsider".' The Scots were more tolerant and more patient, but their thought was too metaphysical to take the Indian thinking seriously.[1] Thus an Englishman on his own people

Some other general considerations are also relevant to this issue. Social mixing is impossible without a language common to those who mix. Gestures, however eloquent, do not encourage understanding. We have already seen that it was not given to many Englishmen to learn an Indian language well enough to converse in polite society. The Indians did not find it easy to master a language so alien in thought and diction, and the *babu* English that most of them practised on the astounded Englishman produced more derision than sympathy. Every foreign conqueror brings his own language with him and expects his subjects to learn it as fast as they can or to suffer in ignorance. Persian came with the Muslims and, though the Islamic-Indian impact gave birth to Urdu, the Mughul court and administration remained exclusively Persian in language and culture; and only an insignificant portion of Muslims cared to learn Hindi or Sanskrit. This fact of Indian history ought to be remembered by all Indians (specially the Hindus) when they accuse the British of failing to learn an Indian tongue.

The one fundamental characteristic of imperialism is that it is a relationship of inequality. Conquest would lose its *raison d'etre* if the victor and the vanquished were to be equal in status. This vital point is commonly forgotten by the defeated: hence much of ill-directed and useless criticism of the conduct of the rulers. It is in the nature of the ruler to feel superior, to look with disdain and contempt upon those whom his sword has humbled, to treat his subjects either with superciliousness or with condescension or at best with amused affection, but never as equals. To say this is not to make excuses for British conduct, but to draw attention to a natural and historical fact which the history of every country and race illustrates with unmistakable candour.

The honest truth must be faced that all the racial barricades which were raised were not of the Englishman's making. Similar and equal barriers went up on the Indian side. Each sat behind his veil and accused the other of exclusiveness. The Muslim taboos of eating pork and drinking alcohol kept him away from the English dining table. The Hindu could not conceive of mixing with a people who ate the animal

1. D. W. Brogan, *The English People: Impressions and Observations* (London, 1943), pp. 197-198. This book was reprinted four times in less than twelve months in the middle of the war.

he called his mother and drove a coach-and-four through his caste rituals. Both the Muslim and the Hindu were revolted by the liberties enjoyed by the white woman, called it licence and grumbled against what the world was coming to. Few Indians were yet Europeanized enough to meet the foreigner without creating serious misunderstandings.

The Hindus have always been suspicious of foreigners and have a capacity for nursing resentment over long centuries. The ancient south Indian Dravidian has yet not forgiven the northerner for driving him down to the tip of India and suppressing his culture and language. The Hindu still harbours a hatred for the Muslim conqueror who defeated him in battle and broke his pride and then went on to mock his carved gods and his caste hierarchy. The conqueror and the conquered never mixed and in the fulness of days a partition had to confirm this failure of the meeting of minds. Till very recently the people of central India used to refer to the north-western parts as another country and the Pathans of beyond the Attock as foreigners. The suspicion of the new, the unfamiliar and the strange is a part of human nature and no arguments from metaphysics or logic will change such social attitudes. The modern man boasts of his cosmopolitanism and hopes to win the world with a phrase. The brotherhood of man is a noble goal, but it is yet a goal. This is not a happy thought, but happiness does not come by deluding oneself.

The Indian attitude towards the British was one of ambivalence. They hated the foreign ruler because he was a foreigner, because he was the ruler, because he was white, and because he was a Christian.[1] The combination of so many grounds of hatred was too strong to allow any softening of feeling. But at the same time they also considered the British superior. So strong was this conviction that many Indians believed the rulers to belong to a different biological species. Several Indians could not conceal their awe at British achievements, and looked at them as demi-gods. A man of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's sagacity and experience could not help writing back from England that after seeing the English in their own country he was convinced that Indians were no better than animals and brutes. Such confessions are not hard to come by in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Indian vernacular

1. This had an incidental but harmful effect on the Indians themselves. In their powerless resentment they criticized the British so much that no tune was left to criticize themselves. Self-criticism, the sure sign of a healthy society, was thus absent and greatly damaged their political and social faculties.

writings. Even the well-educated Indian who fought for independence and hated British imperialism acknowledged his intellectual debt to the white man. Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography is a good example of this kind of mixed feeling where the rulers arouse intense hatred and deep admiration at the same time. Nor is this a unique phenomenon. Today most of the nations of Asia and Africa exhibit a similar feeling towards the West: dislike for its imperial past and for its present policy which tends to take the non-Western world for granted, and an envious regard for the technical progress and material prosperity of the West and an intense desire to achieve this in the shortest possible time.

* * * *

Thus the feeling of racial superiority alone is not a sufficient explanation of the British imperial outlook on India. Two other habits of mind contributed to the general attitude.

One was general ignorance of India and everything Indian. This prevailed among all classes of people and in all political parties. On the whole, the Left in British politics was more ignorant than the Right and therefore more dogmatic in its opinions. The Anglo-Indians, a much maligned group of people, were naturally best informed about India, but unfortunately their views were dismissed by many in Britain as reactionary nonsense though, in fact, actual developments in India generally vindicated their views. One example of ignorance on the highest level (or was it pure indifference?) is Stanley Baldwin's reply to G. M. Young's question, 'What do you suppose educated Indians think about Kipling?' The Prime Minister, the architect of the 1935 reforms and the man who took a heroic stand against the diehards of his own party, answered, 'It never occurred to me'.[1]

The man in the street could of course not be expected to be knowledgeable about India. He had a vague notion that his country possessed a vast empire in the East and the thought brought him much comfort and pride. But the educated classes were not much better informed. Indian history did not form an important part of university curriculum; at most places it was not taught at all. This meant that the administrators who came out to India had to learn about the country as they went along, and their background was not that of a specialist. What is more important, it meant that British politicians, who made or criticized imperial policy, based their decisions on insufficient and sometimes incorrect information. It also meant that the elite in general, the journalists, the university dons and others who

1. G. M. Young, *Stanley Baldwin* (London, 1952), p. 190.

moulded public opinion, was not well equipped to understand, defend or condemn the Indian policy. Considering the central place occupied by the Indian Empire in British imperial stakes this ignorance is indeed staggering.

Lord Wellesley once wrote: 'I can declare my conscientious conviction that no greater blessing can be conferred on the native inhabitants of India than the extension of the British authority, influence and power.' Such expressions can be duplicated a thousand-fold from British writings extending from the eighteenth century to the twentieth. Almost to a man the British were of the belief that their rule was good for India and that no other rule could be better. As this assumed the dimensions of an obsession and coloured all their views on India it may be profitable to examine it in some detail.

Some reasons for this feeling of self-righteousness have already been cited. The most important of them was an unquestioned faith in the superiority of the West. To pass this superiority on to India was an act of pious virtue. This superiority was manifested in the idea of progress, which was the gift of the West to the world and which Britain was striving to inculcate in the Indian mind. That British rule in India was therefore for the good of India was not only the belief of the over-confident Anglo-Indian in office but of the best minds of England. To take only three men of admitted intellectual excellence: Macaulay, John Stuart Mill and Morley were convinced that the West alone (and Britain specially) was on the way to progress and that the rest of the world (and particularly India) shall have to adopt the Western ideas if it wished to survive. As rulers it was their duty to transplant these ideas in the Indian soil, even if this had to be done against the will of the people. A child cannot be left to his own ignorant devices simply because he does not agree with his elders.

Asked for a proof of the superiority of the West they unhesitatingly pointed to the industrial revolution and its sweet fruits of material prosperity. The prophets of progress offered technological advance and material improvement with the same fervour with which the missionaries offered spiritual salvation and the Kingdom to come. In fact, the argument from progress carried more force than that from Christianity. In comparing Western and Indian cultures or religions or literatures there could be two opinions. Intellectual, mental and moral achievements cannot be measured and weighed by a scale whose relevance and accuracy are accepted by all. But in comparing Western material progress and Indian industrial backwardness there was no room for

argument. The case was conclusively proved and the critics silenced.

The English emphasis on character building gave a permanent mould to this feeling of self-righteousness. Character meant the educating of an individual in the true performance of his duty to a degree where duty became a religion. Education was not mere learning and intelligence, but a process at the end of which you produced a man who took himself seriously, who could deal with other people in an upright manner, who could perform his duty without wavering, who was capable of self-sacrifice, and above all who could set a good example to others. In India where military superiority alone was not enough (a few thousand keeping a few million in check), the value of the good example was overwhelming. In India the Englishman must be on his best behaviour and show his best side to the imitative native. The slightest relaxation could let his side down: so much depended on the conduct of each individual. This stress on character, so assiduously imparted in public schools, was a good thing and enabled a man to call upon his inner resources in the performance of his duty. But in India it was apt to deteriorate into a cult of conduct and to make men even more self-righteous. It encouraged them to keep aloof from Indians and made them arrogant.

But nineteenth-century public school education should not be made to carry all the blame. It merely reflected the national mentality, it did not make it. The fact is that the British are the Brahmans of the West. They have the same sense of self-rectitude, the same arrogance, the same delusion that they alone are the depositories of all knowledge worth acquiring, the same closed society outlook, the same isolation from the outside world, the same sensitiveness to criticism, the same habit of authority, the same conviction of self-importance.

Is this picture drawn too harshly? In such matters of self-esteem the Englishman's opinion is bound to differ from an outsider's. But there are examples from the English themselves which illustrate the basic truth of the statement. Once, many years ago, when storms in the English channel had cut off the British Isles from Europe, one British newspaper published this news under the headline: CHANNEL STORMS: EUROPE ISOLATED. This is amusing, but perhaps not conclusive; but this happened when imperialism was still rampant. Presumptuousness has survived the end of the empire. Commenting on the coming of military rule in Greece in the *Observer* of 22 October 1967, the paper's correspondent Mr. Patrick O'Donovan, based his criticism of the new regime in Athens on the single point that Greece was unlike

England. 'This could not have happened here' was enough of an argument to condemn foreign political occurrences. No other European journalist could have dared to judge another regime by testing it against the standard of his own country. And this appeared in a journal of deservedly high reputation and liberal opinion in the year of grace 1967 when Britain was neither an imperial nor a world power.

That this arrogance had become a part of the national attitude is shown by its prevalence even on the extreme Left. The British Communist Party laid the line for the Indian Communist Party to follow.[1] This was a strange streak of imperialism in a party which, at least outside the Soviet Union, stood squarely against imperialism. The fact that its leader was a half-Indian proves the point even further.

Britain's attempt to impose a parliamentary system of government on all its colonies, and particularly on India, is also explained by this belief in the perfection of her own institutions. In spite of English admiration for the system of common law there have been parts of the empire where the old French and Dutch legal systems were allowed to remain in operation: Mauritius, Cape Colony, Quebec, Trinidad, St. Lucia, and British Honduras. But for India no other political system except the parliamentary was even seriously considered, though the diversity of the country and the explosive minority problem should have been enough warning against any forced transplantation of an arrangement which required certain definite conditions none of which was present in India. Is it because the British were unfamiliar with any other system and therefore gave India what they knew best? But they had had absolutely no experience of federalism, and yet they not only made India a federation in 1935 but took pride in their inventiveness in doing so. Or, is it because, foreseeing the day when their sway would be over, they were deliberately trying to introduce and leave behind in good vigour a political system which would stand as their memorial when their empire had gone the way of other empires? If this be true and it was an attempt at perpetuating their memory, then here was a case of ambition vanquishing prudence. They shut their eyes to the immense difficulty, almost impossibility, of giving to a foreign people a political system which they themselves had perfected in over a thousand years during which they had suffered a civil war and beheaded one king and dethroned another, evolved a two party system and worked it by tradition and convention rather than by law and statute.

1. For details see Henry Pelling, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, London, 1957.

The British might also have been encouraged to persist in their attitude of self-righteousness by the congratulatory messages they received from time to time from across the Atlantic. Almost till the end the United States was generous with her moral support to British rule in India. Some criticism of the official Indian policy appeared during the second world war, but this was neither well informed nor widespread. Generally the Americans echoed the British conviction that their rule was the best thing that could have happened to India. No viceroy of India of the brightest imperial hue could have put his case in more vigorous terms than those employed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909: 'In India we encountered the most colossal example history affords of the successful administration by men of European blood of a thickly-populated region in another continent. It is a greater feat than was performed under the Roman Empire. The successful administration of the Indian Empire has been one of the most notable and the most admirable achievements of the white race during the past two centuries.'[1]

It is difficult to defend arrogance of any variety, and no attempt is made here to distribute praise or blame. But to understand British arrogance one must never overlook the Indian attitude towards their white rulers. It may sound curious to the foreigners and perhaps treacherous to the Indians, but there is no exaggeration in saying that Indians themselves were in a larger measure responsible for the treatment they received at British hands.

Thanks to the incessant and skilful propaganda of Indian politicians (particularly of the Congress affiliation) the world heard much of the politically minded, sophisticated, brave Indians who always stood manfully against the *raj*, sometimes brought it to a stand-still, and often caused much concern to the British empire. The fact is that for an overwhelming majority of Indians the *raj* was no menace to be opposed tooth and nail, nor was there much virtue in political agitation and bomb-throwing. These people lived their normal lives and left the excite-

1. See the *New York Times*, 19 January 1909. However, it is not wise to attach too much importance to any American views on India. It has always been easy to persuade Americans to support any cause. To balance Roosevelt's encomium it is useful to recall that on 10 August 1942 the *New Republic* felt so strongly about the difficulties the Indian minorities were creating that it suggested, seriously and enthusiastically, the repression of communal disorders by the use of an Anglo American bombing force or, if the British were too short of planes or reluctant to use such methods, by the loan of American air force planes to an Indian government (by which the paper meant a Congress party government). The *New Republic* was a journal of some reputation and its views cannot be dismissed as coming from the lunatic fringe of American liberalism. In face of such monstrous suggestions (there have been many more in similar vein) it is safer to take American opinion on India with a large pinch of salt.

ment and risks of politics to those who loved that kind of thing. The picture drawn by expert publicists showing a vast, seething mass, desperate with frustration and impatient to throw off the foreign yoke, is like a modern abstract painting which conveys everything to the man who painted it and nothing to the viewer.

The average Indian marched on to his destiny, placid, encompassed by small anxieties which made up his life, loving peace and quiet and good weather so that his two meals arrived without interruption, grateful to his Maker for whatever the new day brought, without ambition, without extravagant hopes, used to a succession of foreign rulers, reconciled to the position fate had allotted him, in a way even happy in his small world. He was not sensitive to gusts of political change. He was not even sure if change would bring a difference to his lot. His ancestors had seen changes of bewildering rapidity, but for him nothing had really changed. He was simple hearted, but he was certainly not a fool. He knew where his interest lay, and for the time being he knew that it did not lay in opposing a rule about which he neither knew nor cared much and which anyway left him in relative peace.

This means that normally he did not give much thought to how the Englishman behaved. It was a foreign race which now ruled the land, and a white race to boot; and alien people had alien manners and mores. So he tolerated much at the hands of the British which he would not have accepted from his own people. And parts of India had been rescued by the white man from abominable repression. Look at the Punjab under the Sikhs where a great majority of people lived in terror by night and despair by day. What else could they do but welcome the British with a sigh of pleasure and gratitude? The Indians have one virtue: they are not ungrateful. So the deliverer was shown respect and even when someone misbehaved they overlooked it and preferred to remember the gentleman who had been kind rather than the boor whom power had turned mad.

There was also a class of not inconsiderable size which, insensitive to rough treatment and untouched by self-respect, brought its unstinted tribute of obedience to the ruler's threshold. The white man's smile was their highest reward. The white man's favour was their highest ambition. To shake hands with the white man was an experience whose smallest details lived in the memory of a generation. In the presence of the white man they bowed low as if there were hinges in their backs. British arrogance meant nothing to people of this temperament who had lived for centuries in a country where the arrogance of power was an

immortal tradition.

In parentheses it must be mentioned that after two decades of freedom most Indians and Pakistanis are still mentally a slave to the white man. It is not uncommon to find a junior functionary spontaneously rising in his seat to welcome a supplicant of white skin and reserving his harsh, officious aspect for men of his own race. In post offices and other public places the counter clerk still tells the long waiting line of customers to wait and insists that a white man down in the middle of the queue should come to the front and be served right away (the one whom favour has been shown is often embarrassed, but the clerk proudly boasts of his ability to spot a white face and of his authority to dispense favour in the order he chooses). Several scholars in South Asia have bitterly complained of discriminatory treatment shown to them by their own Governments. Senior local men have been brusquely turned away with an eloquently unhelpful shrug of shoulders; the foreign white scholar (in many cases merely a post-graduate student) has usually managed not only to read confidential papers but to reproduce full texts of classified documents in his books.[1]

It is evident that no race or people can stake a monopoly claim on arrogance. It comes by natural course to whoever has authority; it is a pity that it comes in unashamed nakedness to those who once protested against it.

The fact that British arrogance was largely a product of Indian cringing to the white ruler is further illustrated by what we have already said about the difference between the Englishman's treatment of those whom he found self-respecting and those whom he found spineless. He gave to each what in his opinion they deserved: equality and respect to one, contempt and scorn to the other.

It is instructive to look at the way the British treated the Pathan (and to a lesser extent the Baluchi and the rural Punjabi of the western districts). A large number of Englishmen of varied background and temperament were attracted by the north-west frontier: Churchill, Caroe, MacMunn, Fraser-Tytler, Lumsden, Herbert Edwardes, Dr. Pennell of Bannu, and others. All of them found the frontierman proud, self-willed, hardy, courageous and freedom loving. Here at last was a 'man' who fought with dignity. How different from the Bengali terrorist who carried a bomb in his *dhoti*! The Pathan was a dependable friend in peace and a good enemy in war. For the first and only time the British met an Indian whom they could meet on equal ground and

1. I have personal experience of all the three general examples given here. The Indians I know relate similar stories.

enjoy the encounter. There was a running battle going on in these bald hills and each side fought tenaciously for its principles. But the hands were clean and the hearts free of contempt and bitterness. Frontier duty became the most exciting of all imperial duties, and the frontier continued to cast its spell on the white rulers right up to the end. There could have been no arrogance here for the Pathan was even better endowed with this quality. When the Englishman met his match he curbed his haughtiness and treated the Pathan with regard. Other Indians could not muster enough self-respect to look the Englishman in the eye and to tell him that they were men who wanted to be treated as equals. They must carry a fair portion of the blame for making the Englishman what he was. Only an unmitigated fool will fawn upon his master and then whine that the master is overbearing

* * * *

Thus far we have been looking closely at the individual colours which made up the Englishman's picture of India. Let us now get back a little and try to take the whole canvas in one glance. And as we go to the end of the studio, turn back and start walking towards the easel we find that as we approach the picture with every step it changes its shape and colour. This is what happened to the English image of India. Each stage of British rule opened a new window into the studio or closed an open one. Fresh light entered, adding new shades to the picture, and at the same time some light was cut off from another angle and a portion of the canvas was darkened. What had looked murky and confusing some time ago was now clear and bright; but another corner, where a while before colours had leapt to the eye, was now a sombre nothingness. In the next stage more windows were opened and shut and the new play of light and shade once again made the picture take on a different life. And so it went on till the picture was no longer needed on the wall, and after one last nostalgic look, full of searing memories, the caretaker took it off its golden hook and carried it down to the imperial cellar where it now lies amid several similar but smaller frames and much other bric-a-brac. Sometimes, but now at lengthening intervals, a curious visitor comes down to see it, blows away the dust and the cobwebs, looks at it now from this angle, now from that, loses himself in reverie, tries to conjure up a past once made glorious by this vision, and goes home to tell his friends something of the history and provenance of the picture which was once such a lovely reality. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

In the eighteenth century, when India first swam into the English ken, British attitude was neither racial nor stridently imperialist. There

were some reasons for this. A few realized that British supremacy had been achieved by a judicious combination of juggling, chicanery and luck. When Clive returned to England laden with riches acquired by dubious deals, Lord Chatham warned his peers in the House of Lords that 'the riches of Asia have been poured in upon us, and have brought with them not only Asiatic luxury but, I fear, Asiatic principles of government'. To which later Clive himself, in the course of answering a parliamentary inquiry into his Indian deeds, uttered his famous(!) sentence: 'Am I not deserving of praise for the moderation which marked my proceedings?' Hastings had hired out Company troops to fight the Rohilla and Maratha wars which had nothing to do with the Company. His plea of defence mocked morality: 'The war was successful, a troublesome neighbour was removed, an ally strengthened and a neat profit made in the bargain. This was justification enough.' The Commons heard him with that awful respect which the men of talk generally have for the men of action and acquitted him of all responsibility in these wars. But he was censured for the despoliation of the Begums of Oudh. The long impeachment which followed ended in April 1795 in his final and complete exhoneration.[1] Parliament confirmed that in the task of empire building one should not be unnecessarily encumbered with moral principles. In the next century William Cobbett was to cry out against such immoral acquisitions: 'We must be actuated by a sheer love of gain; a sheer love of plunder. I really believe, that the history of the whole world does not afford an instance of a series of aggressions so completely unjustifiable and inexcusable.'[2] Even though many people did not share this view in the eighteenth century, a vague doubt about the morality which went into the foundations of the Indian empire kept the Anglo-Indians and others from displaying their finery too immodestly.

There were others who did not think that the empire would last for ever. The first impression of India was one of vastness and of distances which seemed eternal. Nor had full confidence yet made them sure of themselves. India was still ruled, though not with the vigour of earlier days, by the Mughul. It was still too early to dream of the English realm expanding province by province and principality by principality. One day the vision would come true, but today it

1. Bad reputation was not really considered a disqualification for imperial work. On his appointment to the Canadian inquiry, Durham put on his staff two men of proven dishonesty and unsavoury past, Edward Gibbon Wakefield and Thomas Turton.
2. G. D. H. Cole and Margaret Cole (eds.) *The Opinions of William Cobbett* (London, 1944), p. 258.

was not wise to flaunt one's hopes as if they were realities.

Nor had Britain (and Europe) of the eighteenth century yet come to believe in that magic word 'progress'. A few more years were to pass before progress could be regarded as an inevitable concomitant of Western civilization. The passion for civilizing the whole world, the relentless *idee fixe* which drove the imperialist forward without mercy or respite, had not yet taken hold of the British. India and her way of life did not arouse the white man's contempt. Several among the early Anglo-Indians were men of scholarly bent of mind who looked at the Indian past with respect tinged with varying degrees of admiration. They found no reason to interfere with the Indian stream of life which they studied with the curiosity of a new-comer rather than the assumption of an imperialist. For many of them this was their first contact with an ancient oriental civilization—British contact with the Ottomans and the Arabs was much older but Islam, unlike Hinduism, was not a purely oriental civilization—and a few wanted to preserve it, not so much because it was perfect or superior to their own but because ancient things should not be destroyed. India was a museum where long-forgotten systems could be examined as if in a glass case.

It is generally, but erroneously, thought that because the House of Commons emptied of its members during Indian debates in the nineteenth century, a similar state of indifference obtained in the previous century. In fact, the House was unusually stirred when India was under discussion. There was a reverent hush when Burke rose to speak, and a tingle of excitement swept the chamber when Sheridan stood up to roll out his phrases. Pitt was there and so was Fox, and one stole the bill of the other and so passed his name into the pages of Indian history. It was an Indian issue which broke North's coalition into pieces. It was again India which hounded out a man of Fox's calibre and ruined his public life. The knowledge that India was very much in the thoughts of the Commons must have influenced the attitude of the men who ruled India for the Company. It was plain common sense not to expose oneself too much to parliamentary inquiry or to provide an occasion for criticism. It is true that the House was not over-anxious to see justice done in India, as its decisions on Clive and Hastings showed, but the fact that it had its eyes on India and the fear that it may choose to interfere at any moment helped to bridle racialism and other darker manifestations of imperialism.

We should also remember that the eighteenth century was primarily one of continual warfare. Battles came thick and fast and crises arose like the dust of an Indian summer. There was no time to relax, to look

around and to form any definite impressions. It was an age of conquest and some consolidation. Opinions and attitudes are not formed in the thick of battle when life is measured out in hours and no one knows if tomorrow's dawn would bless his sword with victory or curse it with defeat.

The nineteenth century was the century of imperialism *par excellence*. It opened at soft notes but before it closed the drums of empire were throbbing loud and clear and the music was crashing into a crescendo which was heard around the world. Naturally there was a change in British attitude to India (and to empire in general). Imperialism shed its inhibitions. Gradually there arose a deep contempt for everything Indian. It was an era of interfering and meddling. Everyone was inspired with reforming zeal. Utilitarianism, evangelicalism and other less known theories made India a convenient social laboratory where the oriental was to be re-made in the Western image. Confidence grew apace as the boundaries of the empire were pushed back. A feeling of superiority obsessed the ruling mind and the colour bar was raised to maintain the purity of the Western cultural tradition.

Several factors had brought about this change. For one thing, the British were much impressed by the advance of technology in Europe. In the material field the fruits of this progress created (or confirmed) a feeling of superiority of their civilization and way of life. This destroyed their respect for ancient Indian civilizations. To tolerate their continuing existence was to compromise with primitiveness, reaction and superstitious heathenism. It was the duty of the progressive West to civilize the stagnant East. The cult of the white man's burden was born.

The Utilitarian philosophy now took the field and gave the support of its doctrinal respectability to the reforming zeal of the Anglo-Indian administrator. Bentham and the two Mills elevated the desire for reform to the level of a crusading virtue. It is significant that the Utilitarian ideas were first practised on India through such people as J. S. Mill, Macaulay and Grant.

The reforming zeal of the Utilitarian was matched by the evangelical's zeal of the Christian missionary who looked at Hinduism and Islam with impartial contempt. India in his opinion was a medley of farcical spirituality, wicked ritual and degrading superstition. He read Indian history in a novel fashion to prove that India had lost her place in the sun because of its religious corruption. Anyway, Christianity was the perfect faith and it was his duty to pass on its message of salvation to the unbelieving Indian races.

So strong was the hold of imperialism in this century that even some convinced anti-imperialists made an exception of India when they spoke against the concept of empire. Goldwin Smith, the self-confessed 'last survivor of the Manchester School', spent his life arguing that colonies should be allowed to separate and form their own independent nations and that this was the most desirable end for the empire. But the 'principle of Colonial Emancipation does not apply to India, because it is a conquered country, not a Colony; and to throw up the Government without making any provision for the preservation of order when we are gone, would be to do a great wrong to the people in addition to those which have been already done'.[1] The imperialists and anti-imperialists agreed on one point: they were all in India for her good and they could not in all conscience abandon her to her own devices. The white man's burden was a creed to which both schools remained steadfast: one in the high *elan* of rampant imperialism, the other in the belief that expediency ruled out a different policy.

Yet, the high imperial tone of the nineteenth century could not suppress the voice of dissent. Non-conformity spoke in subdued accents and it spoke in vain, but the fact that it spoke is a part of history. The dissenters were troubled by three things. Some did not subscribe to the theory of imperial immortality. A day, however distant, was bound to come when British hold over India would disappear. Sir Thomas Munro, the noted Governor of Madras, expressed this belief in one of his carefully-worded minutes which he wrote on the last day of 1824. 'We should look upon India', he said, 'not as a temporary possession, but as one which is to be maintained permanently, until the natives shall in some future age have abandoned most of their superstitions and prejudices, and become sufficiently enlightened to frame a regular Government for themselves, and to conduct and preserve it. Whenever such a time shall arrive, it will probably be best for both countries that the British control over India should be gradually withdrawn.'[2] Three points about this statement should be noticed. He hedges his opinion with strict qualifications and looks to a very distant future for the desired consummation. He writes in 1824 when imperialism had yet not fully matured and eighteenth-century ideas were still current. He fully agrees with the pure imperialist school in believing

1. Goldwin Smith, *The Empire* (London, 1863), pp. 292-293. This book first appeared in the form of letters to the London *Daily News* in 1862-63. He was then Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford.

2. *Sir Thomas Munro, Selections from his Minutes* (London, 1881, ed. Arbuthnot), Vol. II, p. 327

that India is sunk in superstition and that it is the duty of the rulers to stay until she is fit to be free. Nevertheless, his is a new voice, at least contemplating a future when India shall gain her independence. There is a clear hint of promise, though only a hint.

Nine years later Macaulay added his own cautious support to the vague dream of a future free India. He, too, was reluctant to commit himself in definite terms, but his words carried not only a half-promise of independence but also a solemn affirmation that England shall be justly proud when the day of Indian freedom dawned. In his speech in the House of Commons on 10 July 1833, when the Company's Charter of 1813 came up for renewal, the peroration contained the thought that the day when India shall be free 'will be the proudest day in English history'.[1]

The magnificent eloquence of this speech cannot hide the imperial substance of the argument. India is a land of superstition and ignorance (how often does the word 'superstition' appear in English accounts of India!). She must be civilized and enlightened. When this glorious mission has been completed, she will demand her right to freedom which England shall have to give her. That will be a proud day for England. Macaulay was a little more definite than Munro in the hope that such a day would come; though both talked of ages rather than years. Macaulay also went beyond Munro in making the orderly end of empire a title to English glory. Munro's tone was reluctant, as if implacable reason was wringing a truth out of him which he was hesitating to admit. Macaulay too had his doubts, but his words carried the impress of optimism and he seemed to relish in divining a happy and proud end to imperial India. Of course, the background of the two men explains the shift in emphasis. Munro was a soldier and a forthright administrator with long years of active service in India. Macaulay was a man of lively imagination, a Utilitarian who believed in the ascendancy of hope, and a man of letters who was used to play with beautiful words. Again, Munro wrote in the calm and repose of his study where he could choose his words with leisurely care and express himself clearly but circumspectly. Macaulay was speaking in the House of Commons before a large assembly where members are liable to be intoxicated with the flow of their own words, where some play for the benefit of the gallery is unavoidable, and where, particularly in the peroration, eloquence outruns caution. Yet in both men there

1. T. B. Macaulay, *H. C.* 3 *S*, Vol. XIX, Cols. 535-536, 10 July, 1833. The relevant passage has already been quoted.

is a realization that imperialism in India is not an end in itself, that it strives to achieve certain noble goals, and that one day foreign rule, however great and enlightening, will have to give way to the rule of the native—a native set free from his faults by the West.

The third dissent from the standard imperial approach was indeed radical. Imperialism, specially in India, brutalized and corrupted the imperial power. As Marx had seen the seeds of self-destruction imbedded in the body of capitalism, so some English anti-imperialists saw the seeds of corruption in the imperial system. Richard Cobden, upholding the radical and economic traditions of Cobbett and James Mill but going much farther in his opinions on India, wrote on 16 May 1858: 'I am afraid our national character is being deteriorated, and our love of freedom in danger of being impaired by what is passing in India. Is it possible that we can play the part of despot and butcher there without finding our character deteriorated at home? [Note the date of writing: the work of suppressing the Mutiny was still in progress]. Were not the ancient Greeks and Romans corrupted and demoralised by their Asiatic conquests, and may we not share their fate, though in a different way?' Then he takes up another aspect of this corrupting influence. 'It is more and more my conviction that the task of governing *despotically* 150 millions of people at a distance of twelve thousand miles cannot be executed by a constitutional Government. It ought to be done, if at all, by a despot, whose rule is concentrated, and less liable to personal changes than our representative forms admit.'[1] A quarter of a century later, General Gordon echoed this line of thought but was more specific in his objection. He believed, from his own Indian experience, that official life spent in India 'accustoms our men to a style of life which they cannot keep up in England'. Women, too, went into sad deterioration in hot climate and a racial atmosphere.[2] Some Anglo-Indian novels of the nineteenth century bear this out.

However, these gestures of protest (for they were no more than this) could not check the expansion of the empire or the superior feeling which vast possessions have a habit of bringing with them. The imperial caravan passed triumphantly from one halt to another, and some time in the third quarter of the century the celebrated jewel in the crown was at its brightest. This was the apogee of imperialism in India,

1. Richard Cobden, *Letters on India*, reprinted in John Morley, *Life of Cobden* (London, 1881), Vol. II, pp. 216-217.
2. *The Journals of Major-General C. G. Gordon of Khartoum* (London, 1885, ed. A. E. Hake), 12 October 1884, p. 189.

probably in the whole empire. Never again was the pride of empire to touch such heights, never again was so much to be taken for granted with such nonchalance, never again was confidence in the greatness of Britain to pass current as a faith. After that, sheer momentum carried the empire forward for many years, though at first all seemed well and only the discerning eye could notice the signs of decline.

When the new century opened much had changed in the British view of India. The ardour of former days to cast the East in the mould of the West, which had driven many Anglo-Indian administrators like a demon and had achieved much, cooled down. In Britain herself the star of Utilitarianism was setting. While the nineteenth-century Englishman had interfered with gusto and set out to destroy and re-build, his successor cultivated a studied indifference, like an exhausted long-distance runner who is too breathless to do anything but puts on a bold face to impress the world. The chilling contempt of previous years allowed itself to be tempered with toleration: the next stage of acceptance was never reached. It seems as if Britain, after a long, trying effort, had given up India as an incorrigible land where inertia overwhelmed enlightenment, tradition rejected progress, and superstition still roamed the world of intellect. Contemporary memoirs and impressions betray two streams of doubt. One is that Britain had tried to improve India to her utmost capacity, and if performance had tarried behind the promise it was India's fault. The other is that there might have been something wrong in the Western ideal of Progress itself. The belief in Progress, uttered so confidently a generation ago, came under scrutiny and the question was raised if the nineteenth-century enthusiasts had really been on the right path in celebrating its praises when its first major application to an Asian people had been a disappointment.

To entertain doubt is an adult habit. To ask questions is to grow up and face the reality. Only a fool or a child takes things as they come and cares not a jot for the 'why' and the 'whereof'. In this sense the British came to maturity with the new century. But maturity is the enemy of blind faith, and imperialism was nothing but a blind faith in a glorious destiny achieved by the inner certainty of the soul. The glory lasted just so long as the faith behind it laughed all questions to scorn. It was a shining armour which showed no chink to doubt. But once the spirit had begun to question itself the end had begun.

In its infancy imperialism had produced myths and legends and proved their reality by sending out raw youth to conquer lands and found empires. If one hero died ten others sprang to fill the vacancy.

It was easy to feel invincible in this happy age when the strong waxed stronger and the weak waned weaker. Battles were fought to be won, countries were invaded to be conquered, empires were overthrown to make room for new empires. The world was the stage on which the Englishman walked in earnest and in glory. In its senility imperialism produced critiques and explanations. The judge had become the counsel for defence. The certainties of the past were certainties no more. Doubt had mounted an attack which could not be repulsed by repeating the rigidities of the imperial formula. Reasons had to be found for every act and policy. In an age of democracy and intellectual curiosity every assumption had to be justified at the bar of public opinion and before the tribunal of philosophic doubt. Assailed by so much clamour, accustomed to blind obedience, impatient of criticism, weakened by age, imperialism lowered its guards, chafed and fumbled and finally perished with a look of utter surprise on its face. Some thought it a tragedy that so brilliant an empire should have gone unsung and unmourned. Others saw in the setting sun a proof of the mortality of greatness and a fulfilment of the cycle of time. To each in this world fate allots a role to play, and he plays it as well as he can and then he departs. But people go on talking about his act: some calling it a tragedy, some a comedy, not knowing that in the tide of human affairs they are the two faces of the same event.

## CHAPTER 9

# The Imperial Impact

Imperialism is a two-way process. The rulers, partly through their regime but partly also by their sheer presence, make a deep imprint on the life of their subjects. In big things as in small, in ordinary everyday life as in the graceful frills of existence, in the sordid bargaining of the market place as in the cogitation in the sequestered calm of the towers of learning, in the heart of the simple, primitive villager at his plough as in the mind of the subtle, disputatious lawyer in the court, in cuisine as in dress, in language as in literature, in the making of money as ini ts spending—in every thing and in every place the encounter leaves its mark which outlives the imperial presence. If the advent of the British was the first act of this memorable drama, and their changing attitude to India was the second, their impact on this imperial domain was undoubtedly the culminating point, the final third act, the denouement, for it is by this that history will pronounce its judgment on the ruler *and* the ruled. Did the rulers make an honest and just effort to live up to their claim that the improvement of their subjects was the only justification of their presence in India? Did the Indians, apart from protesting against exploitation, humiliation and loss of freedom, make good use of this Western incursion by learning how to beat the West with its own weapons? How much did India gain from British rule? What contribution did the Indians make to India's progress under British supervision, inspiration and guidance?

To consider these questions is to estimate the place of British imperial India in Indian history. A final verdict is neither possible nor practicable. There are no finalities in history, only hypotheses. There

is no set pattern in the movement of human affairs. Man gropes and strives and fumbles; sometimes he succeeds beyond hope, sometimes he fails beyond his own fears. He makes dazzling empires and for a brief moment (for time is eternal) lives in glory and calls it greatness. When others take his place he suffers and complains, and again for a short hour he lives in misery and calls it misfortune. And so life goes on, balanced at the ends of a see-saw, and we call it history. Let those who find in history a syllogism of certainties play the pontiff. For us the moving finger writes and having writ moves on. Let us try to read what it has writ.

* * * *

Facts and assumptions never coincide. But sometimes they live so close to each other for so long that distinction is blurred and truth becomes a fugitive. The British have always argued that there was no real opposition in India to their rule, and that therefore they ruled with popular consent. This, they say, was a fact. The Indian politicians and writers have urged with equal vehemence that their people were never reconciled to British rule and that it was coercion and force which held the hateful yoke in place. This, they insist, was a fact. Each side has called the other's fact an assumption, and then proceeded to argue on the assumption of its own fact.

An assumption will not become a fact by repetition, nor will a fact be transformed into an assumption by denial. Bared to the bone the argument really turns on the use of words. When the British claimed that their rule was accepted by India, they used the word 'acceptance' to denote what was actually acquiescence and indifference. When the Indians said that foreign rule was opposed by Indians, they were mistaking a part for the whole and reading in the limited, urban, political protest the signs of a general, universal resentment. A little care in the use of language would have resolved the confusion. There is no doubt that the general mass of Indians were completely indifferent to foreign rule. To feel the loss of freedom requires a level of sophisticated thought which was beyond the reach of the average Indian. In giving it the name of acceptance and consent the British were guilty of exaggeration. In extending the criticism of the political classes to the placid millions the Indians were guilty of dressing up their wishes in the garb of reason. The guilt on both sides was so small, but it was blown up to monstrous proportions by acrimonius debate, emotional nationalism and the urge to be self-righteous.

It is almost self-evident that Indians as a whole did not oppose British rule at any stage. In the early years when the empire was slowly rising

from the smoke and embers of chaos and internecine rivalries India was conquered by the British with Indian soldiers, Indian help and Indian allies. The diversity and disunity of India helped the British, but these were not their creation. The general support given to the British during the Mutiny should suffice to demolish the Indian 'nationalist' argument that India was full of discontent and resentment. The rising was limited to a small part of the country and was put down with the help of Indian troops. Several provinces and races remained calm and loyal, others gave valuable aid to the British. With the whole of India ranged on the side of the rebels it would not have taken long to expel the foreigners. Today nationalist historians in India and Pakistan are fond of calling the Mutiny a war of independence or the first national struggle against the British. They forget that India was not, at that time or at any time at all, a nation, and even if it was, a considerable part of this nation either kept aloof from the struggle or actively sided with the enemy. To re-write history is one thing: to invent it is another.

Some Indians admit that there was no national sentiment in mid-nineteenth century, but say that such a feeling had definitely come into being fifty years later. If this is true Indian opposition to foreign rule should have increased many-fold and the difficulties of the government become proportionately greater. But then how do we explain Indian willingness, almost keenness, to join the army and fight for the British in the two world wars? In the first, India supplied a huge army in spite of Indian resentment, in spite of the Khilafat unrest and in spite of political agitation for reforms. A part of the Indian army, which consisted of Muslim troops, fought not only for the British but against the Turks at a time when Indian political leaders were going to jail for their anti-war and pro-Turk opinions. In the second, the government was able to raise a still larger army and receive general support in war effort and princely monetary help at a time when the Congress ministries had resigned in protest against Indian involvement in the war and when Gandhi had launched his individual *satyagraha* campaign and when (later) the entire Congress leadership had been thrown into prison and the party declared unlawful.

Surely Indian 'nationalism' had come of age by 1914 and surely India was clamouring for independence by 1940. For years the politicians had been saying that Indians disliked and opposed foreign domination, that India was one vast seething cauldron of resentment, frustration and dark despair, and that if their wishes were thwarted the country would go up in an explosion. In fact, nothing happened at all except that a few million men were ready to risk their lives for the British for fifty

rupees a month and many millions more were running the government efficiently, peacefully and loyally.

The degree of Indian acquiescence in British rule varied from class to class, even from individual to individual, and was determined by a host of circumstances. Generally speaking, the minorities were better disposed to foreign presence than the Hindu majority—partly because they feared the permanent rule of an unchangeable majority based on religion, partly because the government proved more generous than the Hindus in granting safeguards to the minority groups, and partly because minorities, by definition, always lean more on the *de facto* holders of power. Acquiescence was also a child of Indian disunity and diversity. Had all India been moved by one strong current of nationalism much indifference would have been swept out of sight. History, too, was on the side of the British. They had created a united India out of a welter of principalities. The nationalists were hard put to discover a centre of loyalty which could attract men from all directions and pit them against foreign domination. These physical and political factors were bound to militate against any concerted or deeply-felt opposition to British rule.

A different set of considerations was simultaneously working in the same direction. The impact of the West on the Indian mind gave birth to liberal ideas and hastened the growth of modern nationalism, but it also influenced many Indians in favour of the British. Impressed by Western intellectual achievements and awed by European technological advance, they did not find it difficult or perfidious to admire the rulers and sometimes even to respect them. The ideas of Locke, Burke and Bentham proved a heady wine for the first generation of the educated youth. Inevitably they compared these liberal, high-minded principles with the firm imperial rule and discovered that theory and practice rarely kept company in the world of politics. But some of them were less affected by this contradiction than by the knowledge that the British were, at heart and even if only in their native land, a freedom-loving race. Some others explored the riches of English literature and were prepared to forgive much to a nation whose poets and men of letters could give such pleasure to mankind. Yet others were conscious that Western civilization was in most ways superior to that of India of their time and, if asked, would have answered that in accepting the white man's rule they were merely acknowledging the superiority of his civilization, not bowing before an individual from beyond the seas.

Though Indian politicians were chary of admitting this, the fact remains that the Indian failure to take an uncompromising stand against alien rule was rooted in British achievements in India. Only a jaundiced eye could deny that the imperial record also contained a credit column. In it appeared such items as internal peace, checking the tyranny of native princes and their publicans, construction of a vast network of vital means of communication and transport, improvement of irrigation and modernising the land settlement, foundation of modern industry and urbanization, introduction of new crops, the raising of the standard of justice, creation of an efficient administrative machinery, establishment of a system of public education, and the breaking down of several revolting religious and social superstitions. An equally long list of misdeeds could be drawn up beginning, in alphabetical order, with Arrogance and ending with Zeal, uncalled for. It could also be argued that much in these reforms was directly or indirectly borrowed from Mughul practice. But then no Government works in a total vacuum, and the present is never rich (or mad !) enough to disown the past. The point turns on the question whether the British left India in better shape than in which they had received it or not. National pride and all the rest notwithstanding, few Indians could, upon their conscience, claim that British rule was an unredeemable failure. As long as they were prepared to see *both* good and evil in imperialism, any attempt to present them as a host battling against the powers of darkness was a crime against truth.

* * * *

To make the Indians acquiesce in British rule was an imperial achievement which should not be under-estimated in any study of modern India. But to make this bald statement and pass on is not very enlightening. We must go behind the plain fact and try to explore the more important points at which the imperial impact was meaningful, significant and, in retrospect, momentous.

Though, as we will see later, Victorian England herself was not completely free of social evils, yet nothing struck the freshly-arrived Englishman in India more than the offensive character of some practices which society justified in the name of religion or tradition or both. The new rulers, still insecure in their hold over the empire and reluctant to interfere in matters alleged to have the sanction of faith, waited a while before using authority in support of a campaign to cleanse society. Once the work of political consolidation was nearly complete, officials turned their attention to this problem. Two other forces combined to

stir up their reforming enthusiasm: the pressure exerted by the Christian missionaries who saw in such a social improvement not only a virtue which was its own reward but also a necessary step towards the ultimate spread of the message of Christ among a near-heathen people, and the Utilitarian philosophy of applying the rational test to social behaviour and eradicating superstition and silly ritual in the cause of improving the quality of human life Driven forward by such powerful currents of thought and encouraged by their own predilections, the administrators and policy makers resolved all their misgivings about political repercussions. The double argument of necessity and virtue was irresistible.

None can deny that several of these social practices were contemptuous of human decency. Suttee was, in fact, the least offensive in the list. There were others which were a shameless mockery of human values and pulled man down to the level of his primeval ancestors. In the south and the centre of India animistic religion had ordered a code of sacrifice in which human beings were preferred to animals. Among the lower castes and some other groups horrible deeds were done in the name of sacrifice. The Todas of the Nilgris and the Banjaras of central India 'drove herds of cattle over children half buried in the sand'. In another part of the country 'a living child was taken round the village and a finger cut off at each house before the victim was at last killed by repeated stabs, the blood from each stab being caught in a hollow bamboo'. Strictly speaking all this was done by people who were on the fringe of Hinduism. But the believing Hindus were hardly any better. In Tanjore 'a male child was sacrificed in the Saiva temple every Friday evening'. In Bastar in 1830 'the Raja sacrificed twenty-five men together at one time'. The Brahmans of the Deccan 'sacrificed a young man at Poona every year and an old woman was slain every time the Raja of Satara went to Partabghar'. Other Hindus sacrificed children in the river. A childless woman dedicated her first child to a god or goddess in the hope that this appeasement will make her fertile. At the age of seven or nine the first-born was fed to the crocodiles of the Ganges or the sharks at Sagar Point. The Brahmans encouraged this practice. Old men and women who refused to die were murdered by stuffing the mud of the Ganges down their nose and mouth. Thuggee, the strangling of innocent wayfarers with a handkerchief, was not highway robbery and murder. It was a religious practice, or at least one in which religion played a central part. In a corner of the handkerchief was a silver coin knotted in the cloth and consecrated to Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction. The aim was not booty but the killing of a man. The booty was the reward which came from the

goddess, not from the killing.[1] Thus was religion made profitable and virtue found in gory excitement.

It is almost a relief to pass from these hair-raising details to the inhuman treatment meted out to the lower castes, particularly the untouchables. The Brahman ruled over the flock with the confidence of the faithful, the arrogance of the strong and the tyranny of the high-born. But he had no monopoly of superiority. He set an example which other castes found it a pleasure to follow, and gave arguments which they found useful to their defence. The weight of this one-sided orthodoxy fell with a clang on the man of the lower castes. He was an inferior being: almost below the human level. Even when he fought on the side of Hinduism and in the service of its glory he was treated as an unequal. The Maratha army, which sought to found a Hindu empire on the ashes of Mughul grandeur, was organized on the basis of caste regiments. So strong was caste feeling that high-caste soldiers successfully protested against what they called the indignity of serving along with low-caste men in the Bombay army of the British, and it had to be reorganized on the basis of one company to one caste.[2] In the daily life of the community the untouchables were not only beyond the circle of social contact but at most places also beyond the line of physical touch. In the south matters went even beyond this and the shadow of an untouchable was enough to pollute the high-caste. Thus man's inhumanity to man was said to be blessed by religion.

The Hindus may retort that something of this kind was not only present in Victorian England but also enjoyed official support. The Non-conformists were not emancipated until 1828 and the Catholics not until a year later. The Jews had to wait many years more for equal treatment. Trollope's novels reflect his belief that anti-Semitism was a religious duty. Parliament was less liberal than its electors and so when Rothschild was elected to the Commons in 1847 the chamber in its wisdom disallowed him to take his seat. Until 1871 no one could be elected to an Oxford or Cambridge fellowship until he had signed the Thirty-Nine Articles. In 1880 Bradlaugh was refused admittance to the House of Commons because he was an atheist and was unable to take his oath on the Bible. For six years a duly elected representative of the people of England was disowned by Parliament on account of religious

1. The curious reader, provided he has a sound heart, will find more details in Philip Woodruff, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Chapter vi (from which my quotations are taken) and in Michael Edwardes, *British India 1772-1947: A Survey of the Nature and Effects of Alien Rule*, London, 1967.
2. See Patrick Cadell, *History of the Bombay Army* (London, 1938), p. 15.

prejudice. More generally speaking, the Victorian age revelled in prudery, reaction, hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness—an astonishing phenomenon in a country which was at this time founding an empire embracing such a variety of religions, races, moral codes and social traditions.

All this is true, but to employ these facts as an argument in defence of Indian social evils or in criticism of British intentions in India is irrelevant in purpose and weak in logic. On the contrary, it is a measure of the enlightened attitude of the Anglo-Indians and their inspirers and supporters at home that born in this period of general conservativism and bred and educated in Britain under these conditions they could yet claim a conscience which was revolted by the sight of these inhuman practices and cried for redress. It is an excellent example of the liberal impact of British rule that the imperial masters were not only ready but anxious to make India better than their own land.[1]

In removing these evils from Indian society the British were fighting against heavy odds. Everything that gives life to a society was against them: tradition, religion, ritual, superstition, prejudice, custom, habit, convention. It was a brave thing to struggle against these forces, so tenacious in a traditional culture. It was a great thing to bring the campaign to a successful end, not only by eliminating the offensive practices but by persuading the Indians, through education, that the elimination was a change for the better. Human sacrifices were outlawed by edict. Suttee was abolished by law. Thuggee and slavery were dealt with by force. But it proved more difficult to remove caste prejudices, partly because they were more deeply imbedded in religion and partly because law could not touch everyday human relations. Still, something was achieved and at least the rigidity of the system was broken. The rest was done (and is still being done) by the Indians themselves. Even here the consciousness that caste discrimination, and particularly the treatment of the untouchables, was bad and should go was a product of the British impact. It came with the other liberal movements of reform which were a direct result of Western influence. External factors, like improved communications and an equal system of public education,

1. The fact that Victorian society was so bowed down by conventions, inhibitions and discriminations is also a partial explanation of British racial and religious prejudices in India. How could an Englishman accept a Hindu or a Muslim of dark complexion as his equal when in his own country he discriminated against a Jew, a Non-conformist, an atheist and even a Christian who was a Catholic—and all these people were white? In failing to relate the Anglo-Indian racial attitude to the texture of Victorian life, Indian (and British) critics of British behaviour in India are guilty either of crass ignorance or of wilful suppression of facts.

which helped these reformist tendencies to grow and spread were also of British creation.

* * * *

Education has always a negative and a positive aspect: it protects society from the cultivation of certain weaknesses and it creates enlightenment and a spirit of curiosity. The system of education established by the British in India successfully performed the negative function but its positive content and influence were unsatisfactory. It created schools where there were none. It taught the Indians the virtue of setting themselves free from social evils. It broke the spirit of caste and the hold of superstition. It cured some prejudices and opened a window on the riches of Western knowledge. But it completely failed to achieve the higher, the more positive, aims of education. In fact, it was not devised to do so. Its organization and nature excluded the pursuit of such aims. It did not create intellectual curiosity. It did not mould character. It did not produce the whole man. From the primary school to the university the ultimate end was to manufacture petty clerks who could be good functionaries but were incapable of thinking for themselves. With poor schools feeding the university intake, higher education became an expensive farce. Universities were neither residential in character nor tutorial in organization. The courses of study were politically explosive (they created political aspirations which could not be fulfilled) without being intellectually rewarding (they imparted information unsullied by knowledge). The standards were not high. The teachers were recruited from that class of society which had been disappointed in getting any other job, and they passed on their frustrations to the students with some bitterness in the bargain. Their salaries were meagre and other conditions of service lamentable. Only for a very short period was there an imperial educational service, and even that was neither carefully recruited nor properly organized.

The reasons for this neglect of education are difficult to understand. Was it a deliberate effort to keep the Indians dependent on foreign rule as long as this could be managed? Was there a fear that education would encourage liberal ideas and create a large class which demanded independence (in fact, this is what happened in spite of the low quality of education provided)? Were the Indians considered unfit to deserve good education? Was Britain herself backward in the development of education in the nineteenth century and therefore unable to give what she herself did not possess?

The last question gives part of the answer—but only a part. It is

true that Victorian England realized its educational plans slowly and with painful difficulty. It was not until 1870 that Forster's Act set up School Boards. Secondary education did not find its feet till 1902. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Oxford and Cambridge were open only to the faithful of the Established Church. Academically too they were narrow-minded and based their curriculum almost solely on mathematics and classics. Discipline was lax among the under-graduates, and the dons constituted a closed, self-congratulatory, self perpetuating community. It was only in 1828 that the first university (London) free of religious tests and narrow curricula was founded. In the two older institutions religious tests lasted till 1871. Female education met strenuous opposition throughout the reign of the Queen. Intellect in woman was looked upon as a freak of nature and treated accordingly. A girl was to be educated, if at all, to make her fit for marriage. So came the 'accomplishments' and the finishing schools. For the general mass of men and women full education came only three years before the British left the Indian shores.

This picture of the Victorian era has some relevance to the educational impact of Britain on India. At least on one point Indian education was superior to the British right from the start: it was free of all kinds of disabilities, religious, sectarian or territorial. In other things our indictment of the Indian system stands. It ignored the character-building quality of education which was central to English education and on which the English so rightly prided themselves. Nor was intellectual curiosity encouraged. This had two unfortunate results which are with us to this day.

The first concerns the mental outlook of the educated Indian. He was a half-baked product. He was like a man who is led quarter of the way towards the goal and then when his appetite is whetted and his eyes have begun to discern things he is left there with instructions not to go a step further. So his mental development was retarded and his capacity to think never allowed to develop. This affected the kind of people who went to colleges and universities. They did not go to learn but to equip themselves for employment. This tainted origin coloured the whole concept and meaning of education. Education came to be an artificial prize which was to be won in order to get a job. A matriculate was better than a labourer only because he could command a few more rupees. The graduate was superior to matriculate only because he could become a clerk and receive a larger salary. When people study for putting two letters after their name and for nothing

else their ultimate ideal is reduced to the passing of an examination. They learn by rote, they cram and mug, they look up previous years' question papers, they pour over guides and notes, they try to remember everything without understanding anything, most of them pass, a few even get firsts.

When this so-called educated class entered the workaday world it carried upon it the mark of the education it had received. Such people had never been taught to think, not to speak of thinking objectively. So they blundered on along the track of life as best as they could, with the blind pertinacity of the ignorant but also with his lack of confidence. In the college they had learnt that catchwords were useful. In actual life the same pattern was faithfully reproduced. They lived by shouting slogans, and if they died others made epigrams out of death. This was the husk of life, an empty, hollow existence, an artificial state of functional activity, devoid of purpose, deprived of meaning, a lamp without light, a movement signifying nothing. Apart from filling low-grade government jobs this class crowded two professions: law and politics, which in many cases overlapped. The lawyers, living on others' misfortunes and their own wits, trained to see only their own side of the case, encouraged to be garrulous in the service of law, ended up as petty politicians. This did not change their nature, only the direction of their artillery. While in the law courts they fired sections and clauses at the opposing counsel, in politics they threw arguments laced with abuse at other politicians and of course at the British. Disputation was the breath of their life, speech the source of their income.[1]

In political terms the educational system produced a strange medley of forces. In spite of its defects the university directed a stream of liberal ideas into young receptive minds. But the trouble arose from the immaturity of these minds and the rawness of the ideas directed into them. A proper system should at least have tried to co-relate the article to the consumer. The mind is like a child. It cannot digest strong food at one go. As it grows and enlarges its feed has to be regulated and increased. This was not done. Undeveloped minds (undeveloped because their school education had been worthless) were given Burke and Mill to read. New ideas were avidly devoured and never digested. This first shattered the peace of mind of the Indian and then in the next generation that of the British when they were accused of withholding something

1. Of course there were exceptions who are well known—Ameer Ali, Jinnah, Jayakar and so many others. I am here describing the general lawyer class which during this period ran into hundreds of thousands. It must also be remembered that a great majority of the exceptions were British educated.

which their own text-books called the rights of man. The English predicament was genuine, but of their own making. They could neither disown their own philosophers nor admit that an Indian became fit to rule himself simply because he had read Macaulay and Bentham. Goldwin Smith described this situation in words whose picturesqueness does not conceal their truth: 'we are wedged in the oak that we have rent'. As in other political and constitutional developments, here too imperialism was assiduously manufacturing its own enemies and giving them weapons to fight with, which it could not in all conscience call either dubious or blunt.

Ideas are relentless things. When they arise in the human mind it is like the rising of the sun. Once the dawn has come nothing will stop the morning. Ideas grow and merge and may lie dormant for a while, but they do not disappear and leave an emptiness behind. So with the Indian mind and the liberal ideas. The seed had been sown by the British. Now the Indians watered it and saw, with only half an understanding but unlimited pleasure, the tiny leaves emerge from the soil. Soon, sooner than anyone hoped, the tree had come to bud, and it was time to talk about the fruit and to imagine its taste.

Many in India criticised the British for forcing Western education down the throats of the Indians against their will. Of course, this kind of education was so different from Indian experience that it split the mind of the educated class and made it neither of the East nor of the West. But to blame the British for this development is irrelevant because it was not unique to India: today the entire East from Turkey to the Philippines is groping for its moorings after it was exposed to Western influence.

But the argument is clinched by the fact that Indians themselves hankered after Western education. The very people who charged the British with corrupting their culture and imposing an alien educational system were glad to receive Western education and to send their children to colleges and schools. It is useful to recall that all nationalist leaders—Hindu and Muslim, moderate and extremist—were either educated in the West (Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru, Muhammad Ali) or had brought themselves up under Western influence (Ram Mohan Roy and Sayyid Ahmad Khan). In fact, leaders who had had no Western education were condemned by a majority of Indians themselves as undemocratic or reactionary—the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jamiat-ul-Ulama and the Jamaat-i-Islami leaders. Ultimately one Indian judged another by the liberal standards derived from the West. The Western educated leader also became a vehicle of spreading the liberal ideas he had

imbibed from the West. The average man would take more things on trust from his leader than from the British: hence the paradox that those who fought against Western imperialism became the instruments of spreading and popularising the intellectual contents of Western civilization.

* * * *

Education is intimately connected with language. Any basic change in the system of education entails a linguistic revolution. Once it had been decided that a new educational system was inevitable it was evident that a new medium was required to fulfil the aims of the new dispensation. It was equally obvious that this new language had to be English. The adoption of English was a logical consequence of British rule. The imperial race always brings its own tongue with it and imposes it on the subject people. The Aryans had brought Sanskrit and the Mughuls Persian. Indian linguistic diversity also dictated the use of the imperial language as the language of law, business and administration. Had there been one Indian language known to all parts and embodied in traditional culture the impact of the alien tongue would have been slight and fitful. But India was a thicket of words where grammars, scripts and vocabularies of various origins and shapes grew side by side. There was some mingling, some borrowing, some alliances of convenience. At least one new language, Urdu, had been born of such contacts. Yet India remained a land of linguistic chaos in which local languages and dialects proliferated with tropical fertility and large groups of people saw one another from across the mutual incomprehension of a linguistic divide. In these circumstances it was almost a logical necessity that the British would employ their own language to rule and educate the empire.

To this argument from necessity should be added the imperial conviction about the superiority of English as a vehicle of civilization and progress. In 1829, before Macaulay had waxed eloquent on the intellectual poverty of the East and the limitless riches of the West, William Bentinck had called 'the British language' the 'key to all improvements'. Macaulay's mind was more brilliant, more one-sided and more far-reaching. To him Hindu learning was a bundle of irrational outpourings and Hindu literature a farrago of childish effusions. Oriental culture in general was overrated nonsense undeserving of any serious notice. Let Indians be educated in reason and some light enter their world of ignorance and superstition. Let them learn a new language and through its treasures become enlightened enough to serve as interpreters of Western civilization to their own masses. So sanguine were his hopes and so strong his enthusiasm that he aimed at creating 'a class

of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect'. India had been conquered by Clive and others through Indian soldiers. Now she had to be intellectually vanquished through Westernized Indians. The Indian soil was now British but this was an incomplete accomplishment. The Indian soul was now the prize to go after, and when this was won imperialism would have fulfilled itself.

Some other considerations also pointed to the same direction. Both the Utilitarians and the Evangelicals, the two spirits presiding over the Indian empire, lived by their faith in the superiority of Western civilization and Christianity over anything that India had to show. The Utilitarians included the English language in their list of 'useful' things, and the Christian missionaries welcomed it as an ally in spreading the Christian message. Add to this thegeneral English inability to learn a foreign language and the case for making English the language of India was complete.

So the English language entered India in 1835 with all the force of authority behind it. The force was perhaps necessary in the initial stages to break the crust of long tradition. There was opposition from the Muslims for it was their language which had been supplanted and they were more attached to their cultural tradition than were the Hindus to theirs. There were some protests from the Hindus, particularly those among them who taught old disciplines. Before long, however, such shouts and murmurs were silenced by the lure of the West and the prospect of material prosperity. A minority among the Indians, relating the triumph of imperialism to the superiority ofwestern civilization, began to learn English with the object of mastering the secret of this superiority and ultimately driving the British out of India. But this must have been a very small minority. The generality of Indians went to English either to know more about the West, its literature and philosophy and art, or to improve their status in life by qualifying themselves to hold official appointments for which a knowledge of English was now obligatory. Such motives impelling Indians towards English were strong enough without official coercion; but if somewhere reluctance showed its unwelcome face a judicious combination of persuasion, cajolery and threat of force was enough to override free will.

The English language has been called the greatest gift that the British bequeathed to India—greater than unity which did not survive imperial withdrawal and which was anyway no more than a fond hope of the Anglo-Indians (and the Hindus); greater than canals and roads and railways for these were no more than manifestations of efficiency,

while to teach a language is to conquer the mind; greater than the eradication of social evils because English was in part the instrument by which this improvement was effected; greater than Christianity which made no real advance at all in spite, or perhaps because, of its imperial trappings, and India did not become a part of the Christian world; greater than parliamentary government which was actually a piece of artificial and clumsy grafting (of course done with Indian connivance) and has in the event proved a failure in one inheritor and a severely qualified success in the other.

If permanence be a quality of greatness, then the greatness of the gift is in doubt. Recent trends in India and Pakistan clearly indicate a sharp decline in the popularity of English, official as well as public. With greater reassertion of traditional culture combined with a feeling that independence is incomplete without a severance of all imperial ties the future of English as a living language is without promise. As relations with other European countries gain strength English faces a growing competition from French and German. In Pakistan the ancient cultural links with Iran and the Arab world are being renewed and the emphasis on her Arab and particularly Persian cultural background is bound to eclipse the importance of English. The general decline of British influence in the East is accelerating this tendency. If English continues in use for a few more decades that will be because of American presence in Asia rather than of British imperial legacy. And this English will not be one that a cultured Englishman would recognize as his own.

But if intensity and force of impact are tests of greatness, then the gift of English can claim a better title. With it came a transformation of the Indian mind. To learn a new language is to go on a voyage of discovery which excites the spirit. But it is more than that. It opens a door into a new world whose riches are more attractive because they are strange. Thought knows no frontiers of language, and speculation has been the privilege of man since the world began. With a new language knowledge increases, the realms of understanding expand, the narrow confines of isolation recede, a new world arises before our vision, a world of unsuspected grandeur whose landmarks are sometimes like our own and sometimes like nothing that we have known. With knowledge comes humility and perhaps some wisdom too. It does not make us rich in the current coin of commerce. But it gives us a new insight into man and a new awareness of beauty—and the price of these things is beyond rubies.

The Indians took to English with the innocent zeal of a child. Its general use increased as the Indian empire expanded. To begin with it was the imperial language, the tongue of the sahibs, and to learn it was to elevate oneself a little nearer to the ruling class. Then came the missionaries and the ardour of religion was added to the prestige of authority. To be a Christian was one step forward towards learning the language of the Christians. Even those who had no intention of changing the faith of their forefathers but who went to missionary schools and colleges came under the influence of English culture through its language. When English was declared to be the official language of the Indian empire, its triumph was assured in a country where the educated classes had but two avenues of making a living: government service and the legal profession.

The politicians discovered unsuspected virtues in the use of the English language. Most of them were lawyers who used it in the courts in the course of their professional work. In the morning they practised it on the honourable judges, in the evening they carried their fluency to the public platform. Further, the political use of English created some order out of the Indian linguistic chaos. Any politician who aspired to be known outside his province or linguistic region had to employ English which was the only medium of communication with other Indians. So all parties, except a few unimportant fringes on the extreme, adopted the language of the imperialists, and a battle ensued in which both sides used weapons which were not only similar in calibre and range but came from the same manufacturer. This did not make for peace, but it did modernize Indian politics. To fight an enemy you must understand him, and to understand him you must learn his thought-process, and to do that you must know his language. And if you are going to answer him in his own language, you must know it well enough to use it effectively—to argue, to persuade, to humour, to threaten, to flatter, even to abuse. The British were opposed on liberal principles borrowed from British thinkers. Obviously this was impossible without a good knowledge of English. Apart from the wealth of argument and the turn of phrase which this knowledge brought to Indian politicians, the liberal content of the whole argument made Indian politics less conservative than Indian tradition could have allowed. Continual use of a certain terminology conditions the mind and the sub-conscious borrows much which it prefers to call its own.

But in one respect English failed the Indian politicians, or those among them who expected it to unite India for them. They shared

this disappointment with a large body of Anglo-Indians who mistook Indian diversity as a vacuum to be filled in by the English language. To call this expectation naive is to pay it a compliment. There is no example in history of a country, as ancient, as large and as diverse as India, borrowing a language from the alien ruler and making it her own. Language is not a matter of technical know-how which can be received from outside and made a part of one's tradition. It is the most complicated mental structure that human brain has evolved for its own use. Language and thought always go together: to think in one language and to express the thought in another is a disaster to creativeness. The use of English could have united India only if every single Indian had completely extinguished his own language, adopted English as the only medium of thought and speech, and thus brought to life a generation which knew no language other than English. This was a task not only beyond the imperial power of the British, not only beyond the inventive genius of the Indian, but also beyond the skill of mankind.

Two other questions have to be answered by those who hoped that English would create a united India. What relation, however remote and tenuous, was there between the English language and the Indian medley of religions, languages, traditions and values? It is impossible to isolate the mentality of a people from the language they speak.[1] The hope of the unity of India on the basis of English assumed that Indians would begin to *think* like an Englishman—a monstrous assumption, monstrous in absurdity, not in morality. Secondly, was there any warrant in thinking that a nodding acquaintance with a tongue as alien as English would give India what five thousand years of history had denied her? To entertain such thoughts was to reduce history to the learning of an alphabet.

For the Indian politicians the use of English was a convenience. For the Indian intellectuals it was an act of homage. For a majority of the educated Indians (educated in the Western way) the use of English was not merely an advantage but an acknowledgment of their intellectual debt to the West. In many cases they knew English better than their own tongue—at least in terms of literary expression. By writing in English they could also reach a wider public. So a class of Indian writers in English grew up and gave a new aspect to the Indian intellec-

1. This point is borne out by what the Americans have done to the original English language. Even cousins cannot speak the same tongue without moulding it in the image of their own mentality.

tual and literary scene. In creative writing fiction attracted them most, though not all of them could surmount the inherent difficulty of depicting an Indian scene or drawing an Indian character in a vocabulary whose nuances and expressions were sometimes unequal to describing the Indian background. In poetry no outstanding work was done. Toru Dutt died too young, while Sarojini Naidu's verses were at time too meretricious, too 'Indian', to read as English poetry. In general prose there have been Indians whose purity of style was a thing of beauty and who wrote English as in truth it should be written. To read them is to know how deep the impress of the British had gone into the Indian mind – but alas! there were so few of them.

Whether used as an expedient or as a necessity, there is no doubt that English was in general use in India for many a year. But there is also no doubt that it did not enter the Indian blood. No foreign tongue could. Persian had been the language of the court and the *salon* for much longer than English, and yet it left little impact on the Indians (in this context the non-Muslim Indians). Language has intimate ties with tradition, religion, mores, folklore, even weather. Therefore, even when the intellect is seen to accept a foreign tongue the soul rebels. The acceptance is not complete or whole-hearted. The borrowed language betrays signs of hybrid development. It is distorted and mixed up with local expressions. The result is as much amusing as exasperating. And so we get curiosities of Indian English like *babu* English and other Indian ways of using English.

Generally the Indian English is contemptuous of the definite article, probably because this grammatical nicety does not exist in Indian languages. In India the government became government without the article. One went to office, not to the office. Then certain words came to stand for things far removed from their original meaning and very different from their ordinary usage in England. A 'station' was a railway station, but it could as well be a hill station of any sort (not necessarily an administrative centre) or a civil station (that part of a town where officials had their offices and homes). Similarly, every government employee above a certain level was an 'officer' (a term generally used in England to describe officers of the armed forces), and above another level a 'gazetted officer', a term unknown to British vocabulary or bureaucracy but still in strict use in India and Pakistan.

The administrative machinery itself manufactured new words or gave new meanings to old words. The word 'emergent', the adjective of emergency, was very popular in official circles, particularly during

political unrest and the two world wars. 'Infructuous' was used more often than its humbler equivalents, unfruitful and useless, perhaps because of its more imposing sound. The half-educated Indian steno-typist must have been duly impressed.

Babu English was a language by itself, though strictly speaking it was only a logical and literal (but utterly wrong) use of the English language. Its practitioners were those Indians whose grasp of English was less certain than their wish to use it. Clerks and petty officials scattered these gems in their notes on the files or in letters to superiors. Here are some examples. On the dismissal of a corrupt public servant: 'For the reasons given, he was fired with enthusiasm'. On the distance to a certain town: 'It is about sixty-five miles, as the cock crows'. To the Governor on having received a decoration: 'I heartily congratulate Your Excellency for appreciating my public service'. Addressing a high official in humility: 'Most becile Sir'—for those uninitiated in the mysteries of Babu English 'becile' was the contrary of 'imbecile'. On receiving a favour at the hands of a superior: 'May God pickle you'—a most expressive way of praying for the sahib's long life!

Perhaps more than the English language (but of course through it) English literature influenced Indian literary work in many ways. We have already mentioned how the work of several English scholars, like Max Muller and William Jones, awakened the Indians (here the Hindus) to the maturity and value of their own literature. Western praise and appreciation of Indian writings impressed many Indians for whom such approval was of much pride. Iqbal and Tagore were translated into English, and so were Hindu classics. Incidentally, this shows the Indian slavish mentality of appreciating a thing only after it has won praise in the West. More specifically, modern Indian literature has taken its realism from European writings. The influence of Wordsworth on Urdu poetry of the middle and late nineteenth century is clearly marked in the 'nechari' movement of the Aligarh school in general and in Hali's work in particular. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's writings on social topics were inspired by English essayists, and he modelled his *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* on the *Tatler* of Addison and Steel. New forms of poetic expression entered Hindi and Urdu poetry under European influence. Sonnets were written, odes were composed, long poems were attempted, and even blank verse claimed some admirers. The previous monopoly of the *ghazal* was broken by these new experiments, and the modern age of Urdu poetry had truly begun. The English poets of the first world war did another service to Indian letters. It was mainly by their example

that some Indian poets began to write political and patriotic verses. Zafar Ali Khan and Hasrat Mohani are the two best representatives of this genre. Their debt to English poets is obvious, though it remains true that some early poems of Iqbal and Shibli had set the precedent.

* * * *

Thus far we have tried to see the British influence at work in social life, education, language and literature. The combined effect was the creation of what has been called an Indian renaissance. The whole society was shaken by the new forces let into India by imperial rule. It was compelled to reconsider the entire foundations of its life, thought and morals. New ideas flooded the Indian mind. New concepts opened new channels of thought. A whole new spirit entered the Indian outlook, possessed it, agitated it, shook it and left it quivering with excitement.

Much has been written on this change in India by the coming of the West, and much more will be written in future. The wind of change blew through every part and people of India, and there was hardly an area or a society which remained immune to its double process of destruction and reconstruction. But the wind did not blow with equal freedom and force everywhere. At places it blew hard and long and swept the old and effete before it like autumn leaves, and after the storm was over the sky was clearer than ever before and people were able to see things which had so far been hidden from their vision. At other places and on other people it blew but gently and fitfully, felling a small tree here, carrying away a rotten roof there, clearing the atmosphere at one moment, raising blinding dust at another. Not everything felt the strength of the storm, nor was all the debris blown away. Some saw the wind for what it was and turned their sails in command to it. Others shut themselves in and let it pass, and when the whole thing was over emerged from their fastnesses with their faith in tradition even stronger and their hatred of the agents of change even deeper.

So the storm raged, as much in the land as in the breasts of men. Some were grateful to it and blessed its cleansing quality. They allied themselves with the new forces with will and zeal, sure that change was good, convinced that the obsolete deserved to die, and pleased at the prospect of a new world arising out of the death of the old. Others shrank into their shells of self-sufficiency, cursing the loss of what tradition held dear, confused at the swift turn of events, awed at the destruction of values which time had hallowed and their own efforts had made sacrosanct. To some of these the wind was unwelcome because it

blew from the West, and the West was the home of materialism, heresy and imperialism. They saw the new order contaminated in its origin. To accept it was to compromise with godlessness, greed and oppression. Others among them saw some good in the new message and tried to pick and choose so that a new world could be built on the foundations of a happy mixture of East and West.

On the whole the wind did its work well. It left its mark on everything—politics, religion, philosophy, literature, art. Generally it brought democracy, liberalism, progress, a desire for change, a thirst for knowledge. It also brought reaction, but even this reaction was different in tone and substance to what it had been before the tempest.

The two major components of Indian society reacted differently to the impact. The Hindus were more vulnerable to intellectual assault because of their traditionalism, their lack of free status for hundreds of years, their want of previous contact with the West, and their eagerness to join hands with the new forces in order to confirm the overthrow of their former rulers, the Muslims. Their ignorance of their own past offered no obstacle to a rapprochement with the West. In the words of a modern Hindu writer, who lived through this renaissance, the impact of Western civilization on the Hindu personality was revolutionary. Under it the Hindus received from the West six new concepts which had had no place in their faith or tradition: 'first, the idea of God—that is, a personal God of the Christian type. Secondly, the idea of Man, as a being whose personality was a thing of value in itself. Third, the idea of Country, which is of course patriotism as understood in the West. Fourth, the idea of Nature, as an ennobling and purifying influence on the human personality. The fifth is the idea of Love as a relationship between man and woman which was not the creation of the sexual urge; and the sixth was the idea of physical Beauty—that is, the bodily beauty of man or woman as a thing of aesthetic and moral enjoyment, not of sensual feeling'.[1] Even allowing for an element of exaggeration in this catalogue, there is no doubt that the Hindu mind was profoundly influenced by the West.

On the Muslims the Western influence was more selective, less comprehensive and not so deep. Islam, even Indian Islam, did not find the West a stranger at its door as Hinduism found it. Not being Indians by origin, loyalty and emotion, Muslims were less isolated from the outside world than the Hindus. Since the commencement of

1. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, "The Impact of England", *The Listener*, 23 November 1967, pp. 664-665.

Muslim rule (that is, since the beginning of their own history) they had had contacts of varying length and intimacy with Afghanistan, Iran, central Asia, some Arab countries, Turkey and even Europe. Their faith itself was far closer to that of the West than Hinduism. Therefore, their reaction to the coming of the West was more confident. They were not swept off their feet. They discovered that much in the new message was but their own convictions in a new dress It was easier for them to borrow from the West without at the same time completely rejecting their traditional values. A comparison between Ram Mohan Roy and Sayyid Ahmad Khan is in this respect enlightening. Both were deeply affected by the West. But while Ram Mohan Roy and other reformers of Hinduism began to examine the foundations of their faith and were in consequence faced with a spiritual crisis of the gravest order, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Ameer Ali, Chiragh Ali, Iqbal and their Muslim colleagues merely tried to reinterpret Islam in Western terms, more to reassure the West that Islam was a set of reasonable beliefs than to prove that its fundamentals were of doubtful validity. Hinduism had to change itself to meet the challenge of the West. Islam met the West half way without loss of belief or confidence. In both religions, of course, there were groups too loyal to traditional piety to acknowledge the existence of the Western challenge or, when the existence was acknowledged, to see anything valuable in the new dispensation. They continued to cling to their old-fashioned ways of thought and by so doing kept alive a fundamentalist approach to religion which, even if it was out of touch with modern conditions and needs, could claim the virtue of stability in a world in perpetual flux.

Whatever the influence and achievements of the imperial impact, there seems little doubt that its central force was the play of reason. The new atmosphere was something like that of Europe after the French Revolution and that of England in the first half of the nineteenth century. People began to sit up and ask questions. Doubt, which had so far hidden its face behind the convenient veil of complacency, assumed respect and became a habit among the thinking elite. Questions, which had been suppressed to please tradition, now raised their head, first with coy, uncertain reluctance, then with gay abandon. It was as if many windows were opened at once into a room which had been shut up for years. The old, musty air was let out and with it departed a host of prejudices, taboos and inhibitions.

Rationalism was one British gift to India which won ready acceptance. Reason became the touchstone of life and all its manifesta-

tions. Faith was shaken. Belief nearly dissolved into scepticism. Assumptions disintegrated in the face of argument. The obvious was no more so obvious when exposed to the test of reason, utility or practicability. Thoughts and institutions were re-examined to see if human reason could defend them. Ram Mohan Roy and Sayyid Ahmad Khan were the first Indians to dare apply intellect to traditional faith. In introducing the criterion of reason in their approach to such a sensitive field they provoked resentment, bitter opposition and abusive criticism, but their efforts succeeded in creating an intellectual revolution which could not be rolled back because the prestige of the West, the sanction of reason and the sense of history were on its side. No transition is painless and throes of travail accompanied the birth of new India.

The new India was brought to life by an alien breath. This was ground enough for a part of society to stand in opposition and measure its strength against the forces of revolution. In the eyes of this class the West was completely and irrevocably identified with political domination, religious intolerance and racial prejudice. The West could not be liberal and at the same time so zealous in the cause of imperialism. It could not be sincere and constructive and at the same time so bent upon spreading Christianity among the Asians. It had no right to talk of reason and human values so long as it looked at the black skin with contempt. So argued a class of Indians who hated the West for many reasons, some strong, some vulnerable. A centre of reaction and hostility was thus built up, both among the Hindus and the Muslims. Religious revivalism sprang up to strengthen the hands of anti-revolutionary forces. The Arya Samaj began as an anti-Western, anti-Christian body, though in a few years its direction of attack was changed towards Islam. The Deoband school was founded to preserve the purity of Islam as a certain class of *ulama* saw it. It was uncompromisingly opposed to everything Western and, consistent with this bias, to every Indian movement which showed signs of Western influence, like the Aligarh movement, Iqbal's teachings and Jinnah's politics.

Indian reaction to the coming of the West was thus two-sided. The two streams of thought, the revolutionary and the traditional, flowed side by side. Occasionally one borrowed a point from the other. In one crisis they actually cooperated. During the Khilafat movement the *ulama* of Deoband and the Westernized nationalist leaders came together in defence of Turkey and the Khalifa. But this was an alliance, a

coincidence of opinions, not an agreement on the fundamentals. This divergence was never resolved and to this day the traditionalist forces stand ranged in Pakistan against the modernizing tendencies. A similar gulf in India separates the Hindu fundamentalist from the Westernized Hindu and no amount of talk about secularism and socialism has narrowed the gap.

It is noticeable that the British impact left a deeper mark in Africa than in India and other Asian possessions. Two factors seem to have caused this. African historical and social background was poorer than the Indian. Africa was very nearly a *tabula rasa* on which the imperial power could impress the accents of its culture. In India, on the contrary, there was already in existence a comparatively sophisticated and complex social system which admitted of change but not of total submergence. In the second place, Indian religions were older, more tenacious and more deeply rooted in human consciousness than those of Africa.

The Indian response to the West was, therefore, more eclectic than the African. The Indian could not reject his faith *in toto*, turn his back on the past and go over to the Western values in heart and soul. He accepted something, he made compromises, he picked and chose. The African's choice was clearer and simpler: he either embraced the West wholeheartedly and without any apparent qualm or continued to live his traditional life without any evidence of alien influence. He did not have to experience the spiritual crisis of the Indian. Who was the happier in the end is a question which the present always asks of the past and receiving no answer waits for the future.

Indians and others will undoubtedly continue to discuss the good and bad of the imperial impact as long as history is read and men remember the past. Every generation will give its own verdict and call it the judgment of history. The British view will not be the same as the Indian. The Hindu's answer will be different from the Muslim's. In the sub-continent itself the people of one province will view the past in one way, the people of another in another way. A Madrasi's attitude to and consciousness of the West are bound to be at variance with those of a Pathan. The British influence was not the same everywhere. Nor were the recipients of the gospel of equal will. Some saw the West in the golden haze of their admiration and opened their breasts to the message with gratitude mingled with awe. Others saw it through the blinding clouds of their fury and shut their hearts against it as if against a spectre of evil. Some others saw the wind rising but did not feel its lash. The storm passed over their heads and left them as they were:

impassive, indifferent, unchanged, unchangeable. They and their forefathers in turn had seen so many such storms pass over this land which the foreigners never seemed to leave alone. How long can human spirit go on pirouetting in command to every eddy and buffet?

Notwithstanding these variations, for most Indians in one aspect the legacy of the West was full of personal anguish. The West had created a tension in their mind which neither time nor effort could heal. They were transformed by the impact, but transformed in a peculiar, subtle way. They belonged neither to the East nor to the West. To make matters worse, they were not acceptable to either world. To the Westerner they were still Indians with but a veneer of the occident upon them. To the Indian they were irreverent rebels against his ancient, indigenous culture. In their own mind they were confused. Their emotions were Indian; their reason western. Their faith was their own; their arguments borrowed from outside. Their culture was neither of this place nor of that. They were mental fugitives, refugees on the move, who had lost their ancestral hearth and yet not found a new home.

This crisis of the soul is still with us. The strain of living in two worlds at the same time, of being disowned by both, and of not finding a third which will accept us, is playing havoc with the integrity of our mind. Some may call it exciting, but those who live in perpetual excitement are in danger of losing their sanity. Two different loyalties pull us in opposite directions. Two different, sometimes contrary, systems of life attract us. A complete synthesis of any two cultures is an impossible dream. We speak the language of one and read the literature of the other. Our customs and traditions are local, our philosophy and politics are imported goods. Our feelings and prejudices are our own; our thoughts are alien. Our values are all mixed up, and happy (but rare) is the man who can relate them into a recognizable whole and live by it.

This choking sensation, this feeling of severe stress, is a part of our Western inheritance. But it does not follow from this that the West is responsible for our predicament. The Indians themselves accepted Western culture so gladly, so willingly, so passionately, that the excuse of external imposition would not stand a minute's scrutiny. It is true that they condemned the pervading influence of Western culture, but in the same breath they welcomed it for themselves and for their children and the pride in cultivating it. The fact is that in their heart they considered Western culture and civilization superior to their own. One reason for this was the unavoidable association of the Western way of life with

imperial power and expansion and with material prosperity. It was not unreasonable to think that a civilization which had made so great an advance and had founded a world-wide empire possessed undeniable virtues. The way to progress lay through modernization, in other words through Westernization. A second reason was that Indians had no distinct culture of their own. There was a Hindu culture and a Muslim culture, and in some parts of India which were homogeneous regional cultures flourished, like Pathan culture for example. But there was no unified Indian culture loyalty to which could be an obstacle to adopting the Western way of life. Here and there the Western onrush met pockets of resistance and opposition, but by and large their own cultural poverty and diversity and the overpowering wish to be modern drove the Indians into the arms of the West.

They learnt English with enthusiasm, not only because it was the language of the rulers but also because it was a key to the treasure-house of Western intellect. To be able to speak English became a mark of social superiority. Parents taught their children to speak the foreign tongue and then flaunted the accomplishment before relatives and visitors. The Western style of living was adopted. Western dress came into vogue. Chairs and sofas took the place of traditional furniture. Motor cars and bicycles displaced old modes of transport. Some Indians joined English clubs if they were allowed to; others opened their own clubs and imitated the sahib in all his colonial glory. Even English food entered the Indian cuisine and a taste for it became a part of a man's cultural equipment. In imitation of the missionary schools the Indians established their own English-type institutions and their superiority to other local schools was taken for granted.

We have been talking here in the past tense because this is an historical narrative. Actually the flowing tide of Western culture is still coming in with unabated strength. It seems as if the departure of the foreign ruler has removed the last vestige of reluctance in accepting the Western way of life without being accused of anti-national bias. Since 1947 the process of Westernization has been quickened. Economic planning, foreign aid, the coming of the Americans, greater contact with European countries, the increasing number of foreign-educated young-men—all these have contributed to the acceleration, but the base of the structure remains the ready acquiescence created under the imperial umbrella. Today in Pakistan newspapers continue to fulminate against the un-Islamic training imparted in missionary schools and still the children of the elite swell the waiting lists of these missionary institutions.

The air is full of talk of re-discovering our cultural past, but the new generation is being brought up on American films, Western comics and a bastard English accent.

There is a deep irony in this situation. In the nineteenth century, English faith in the superiority of its civilization was unquestioned and English confidence in its infallibility knew no bounds. But the Indians were sceptical and hesitated to call an alien god their own. In the twentieth century, England began to question the assumptions of her faith and to doubt the certitude of the dogma of progress. But by then India had come to believe in what the Victorian imperialist had brought her many years ago. The shift in British convictions was not visible to the Indian eye. So in the twentieth century India pursued an ideal whose votaries themselves had forsaken it. This perversity of faith is still with us. Today when Europe is beginning to feel the malaise of the industrial society, we in the East are hankering after an industrial revolution which is bound to reproduce all the evils let loose in the West by machinery in the nineteenth century. European intellectuals are now discovering the limits of their spiritual tether and there is a growing tendency to look to the experiences of the East in search of peace of mind. We in the East are still dazzled by the latest Western theories of life and accept them as the quintessence of human wisdom. Serious-minded Europeans are now worried about the problem of reconciling the existence of a permissive society with the generally-accepted moral principles. But the East goes merrily along, proliferating its own brand of beatniks, beatles and the hippies and encouraging certain trends which have no virtue except the white man's practice. Indians and Pakistanis today pay their tribute to British rule by showing an intellectual subservience to the West of which those who trained us in their image have no occasion to be proud.

## CHAPTER 10

# The Imperial Dilemma

There was a dilemma inherent in the imperial position in India, as elsewhere. This grew out of the idea of the fulfilment of the imperial process. Barring a few incurable dreamers of an eternal empire, everyone knew that one day, however distant and remote, the imperial sway would come to an end. The question was about the how and when of this consummation. It was asked by every generation of rulers but no settled ideas emerged from this self-examination.

In one respect the question was never really faced. The British distrust of elaborate advance planning ruled out a dogmatic approach or a rigidly-drawn timetable of withdrawal. The inherent difficulty of the problem also discouraged any clear thinking. The element of idealism in imperial policy was an added complication. The Indian empire was the most beautiful page in the imperial copy-book, and the contemplation of its loveliness had stunned the mind so much that thinking about the ways of losing it became too painful an exercise. So the end of the empire remained a concept which had to be talked about when necessary but could not be examined with consistency or clarity.

The dilemma was exclusively of British creation and resulted from the purity of imperial practice in India. No serious effort had been made to proselytise India and none at all to colonize it. It was neither British nor Christian in faith, culture, race or background. It remained an India of the Indians ruled by a Christian, Western, white race. How was such an empire to be brought to an ultimate end? The logic of the imperial policy which was being followed led to nothing but permanent dominion. The Indians were like Aristotle's slaves --perpetual children

always in need of a strong guiding hand. How could they go free if they were incapable of growing up? But then, had not the imperial Power said that one day it would depart and leave India to the Indians? Both these propositions could not be true. Abandoning the empire to a people who were believed to be unfit for self-government was treachery against the heart of the imperial argument, for the argument was that imperialism worked for the good of its subjects. If this was true, the only alternative was to stop talking nonsense about a withdrawal, to settle more firmly in the saddle and announce that the empire, like time, was eternal. But this was impossible to declare or carry out for time and circumstance were working against it.

How to get out of this dilemma to which fate and imperial exuberance had brought the English? The human mind is infinitely inventive and a solution was not beyond the ingenuity of a race which had conquered half the world and made a doctrine out of it. So the theory was delivered that imperialism was a school in which subject races were trained for self-government. The message went out that the empire was not to come to an abrupt end at the demand of an ignorant people, nor was it to live till the crack of doom brought everything to a final ceasure. No wise ruler could abdicate and let chaos return to what he had created with sweat and blood. Nor could he go on carrying the imperial burden after the subject people had shown a capacity to take over. The uncharitable could say that this was but a strategic retreat and that imperial weakness was being saluted with a gesture which had more grace than substance. But, then, the uncharitable say so many things. It could also be said that logic had not been flouted in fashioning the new theory, that self-respect had not been surrendered, that imperialism had been given new and not wholly unwelcome lineaments. Let us say that morality and expediency combined to form this attitude and leave it at that, without trying to determine the proportion of each component.

The claim that they were preparing backward and inexperienced peoples for eventual self-government became the stock argument of British colonial policy makers. In the case of India this claim went at least as far back as Macaulay. It would be a proud day in British history when Indians would be able to supplant their white rulers and hold the reins of government with that strength and ease which British training had (one hoped) given them.

The still, small voice of imperialism might have been silenced by the claims of this theory; but the approval of conscience alone is not

enough to solve all political problems. Was the criterion of fitness for self-government measurable? Was it a rational test? Was it used in granting independence to Ghana in 1957 and to Nigeria in 1960? To widen the scope of inquiry and take examples from other European imperial systems, was Congo fit to govern herself when the Belgians decided to leave? Did France apply this standard in giving her West African colonies the ultimate dignity of freedom? Coming back to India, did the British really believe that by 1947 the Indians had reached that level of competence and experience which the rulers had, during the preceding hundred years, repeatedly declared to be the minimum condition on which power was to be transferred?

It is difficult to find any comparable minimum standards by which the ability of a people to govern itself can be measured. The long series of governmental and constitutional break-downs in former imperial possessions prove the flaw in the theory. The British gave independence to Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Sudan, Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan presumably on the ground that these countries had passed the test of competence. What happened in them means that either the criterion was wrong or the talk about it was a farce.

A more interesting question is if alien rule can ever make another people fit to govern themselves. Much mutual understanding is vital to the process of imparting this kind of training. The minds of the teacher and the taught must meet at a plane where mutual comprehension comes without difficulty. Where the two parties differ so much in traditions, civilizations, beliefs and the ways of life as India and Britain did, it is not easy to see how the task of preparation could be carried out without strange results. A minimum of common understanding is essential, otherwise the teacher will train in vain and the school will never close.

The British usually said that they were not prepared to give India her freedom because Indians were not fit to govern themselves. Could not the Indians say the same thing about the Europeans in as late as 1939: when Germany was under Nazism, Italy under Fascism, Spain under Franco's dictatorship, Poland, Greece, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Portugal did not enjoy government by consent, and the Soviet Union was in the iron grip of Communism? The French Third Republic was frighteningly unstable. The brutality of the Spanish civil war and the gas chambers of Nazi Germany were not exactly a flattering testimonial to the civilization and progress of the European races.

Here we touch upon a larger issue. Modern Western civilization is generally proffered as the consummation of human progress, as the

culmination of all that Greek speculation, Roman law and administration, Christian morality, scientific advance and material prosperity have vouchsafed to the Western man. Yet, in modern times it was the West which produced the strait jacket of Communism, it was in the West that the tyranny of National Socialism and Fascism arose, it was in the West that the most deadly wars of all times were fought, it was in the West that imperialism was born. If, then, the East does not lend a ready ear to the claims of the West to perfection, it would be unwise to attribute this to ignorance or prejudice. It was the Western man who liquidated millions of Jews on ground of race. It was the Western man who enslaved hundreds of millions on ground of colour and called it his burden. It was the Western man who killed and ravaged and pillaged his fellow-Westerners for a handful of colonies and markets. No other civilization in history has so completely divorced its claim to greatness from its scroll of deeds.

Even if it be assumed that the foreign ruler can teach with profit, a further doubt arises. Can he judge when the moment of fitness has arrived? We have no abstract standard of judgment, and the teacher has a vested interest in prolonging the process to the uttermost limit of time. Standards will differ from the teacher to the taught. Either the ruler will measure the achievement by his own high standard and therefore naturally and rightly never concede self-government. Or, he will judge by some other standard, a yardstick of arbitrary choice, and then who will judge the fitness of the criterion?

Ultimately it is the practice which sits on judgment and pronounces the verdict on the theory. In practice no standards of self-government were used. The tree of empire let India go not because it was ripe and must fall but because the tree was too weak to carry the fruit or because the gardener was in too much of a hurry. The people of India were in 1947 no more fit for self-government than they had been ten years earlier. In fact the application of any criterion was not even considered. Power was transferred because public opinion at home had lost faith in imperial possessions, because international pressures were building up against the empire which could not be successfully met, because Britain was no longer a world power with the strength and the influence required for the imperial role. A few years later Africa went the way of India for similar reasons. These facts of history suggest the impression that the British themselves forsook the criterion of fitness for self-government at the precise moment when it should have been applied. By doing this they lent strength to the critics'

argument that the criterion was never really meant to be used. Should we take it then that the theory was nothing but hypocrisy?

A further consideration points the same way. The British claimed that they were training the Indians in the art of self-government. But could India learn from a people so conscious of their own superiority? Could a bridge of understanding be built across the divide of such superiority and (consequent) inferiority complexes? Could the lesson of politics and administration be imparted when social contacts were under a ban? Did the British seriously believe that education devoid of human sympathy would do the trick?

There is still another question to be answered. Can one nation train another in the art of self-government? Is it no more than putting across a piece of information or a technical point? Besides, modern political development has been in the direction of democratic self-rule, and it is now admitted that the only training for democracy is through a system of education which emphasizes intellectual curiosity and character building. Had the British been serious about preparing India for self-government they should have established such a system of public instruction, but it is well known that in Indian schools and colleges rote and memory took precedence over everything else, that teachers constituted the lowest paid class in Indian society, and that the degree was considered by the government and the people as nothing more than a piece of paper which admitted the holder to government service.[1] To bring political maturity to a people through this kind of education was to weave a rope of sand.

In the final analysis, it was British aloofness in India which cast doubt on the validity of the theory of training for self-government. The Anglo-Indians talked a great deal about their duty to the people of India, people with whom most of them were reluctant to exchange words of common civility. It is not their sincerity which is in question, but the clarity of their thinking on the empire. Their idea of service was noble, but it was service of the empire, not of India. They hitched their wagon to the imperial star, and even when they gave something to India (and they did give much) they gave as the rich give a copper to the poor, readily, self-consciously, guiltily, with their mind on other things. If they took their rule in India to be a trust they should have tried to gain the confidence of the Indian people by treating them as

1. The failure of India and Pakistan to effect any appreciable improvement in the systems of education inherited by them from the British deserves all strictures, but it does not exonerate the British of their own failure.

equals who were deficient in certain things but not in human status.

But this was not to be. The native was a native and the sahib was a sahib and the two never met. 'The natives, as far as I have seen, have nothing attractive in their character', wrote Lady Honoria Lawrence in 1837, 'indeed, as Gil Blas said, when he was with the actors, "I am tired of living among the seven deadly sins".'[1] The Indian people were inferior and therefore beneath cultivating. Indian things were equally taboo. 'No Collector's wife will wear an article of Indian manufacture. . . and all her furniture, even to her carpets, must be of English make.'[2] The idea was to keep India at an arm's length and to have only such contact with her as the barest necessity required.

Some of the reasons for this aloofness have already been discussed. Some more may be indicated here. The Englishman's dislike of the educated townsman, the principal channel of political training, is not difficult to explain. Partly by tradition, partly under the influence of what passed as education and partly under the stress of political exigencies, he was intellectually glib, loquacious, and insolent and meek by turns—and the English have never liked this type even in their own country.

Much has been made of the Anglo-Indian practice of sending their children to England for schooling. Of course it was an act of aloofness and of fear lest they might pick up undesirable knowledge and an unfamiliar way of life. But there was another consideration, too. Because of their own long absence from home, the British felt themselves more and more to belong to England and more anxious that their children should not be alienated from their own country by foreign education.

It was a part of British belief that a well-educated man could do anything well. The concept of the Indian Civil Service as an instrument of general administration was based on this. In English character there has always been a distrust of professionalism. No professional cricketer, however prodigious in performance, has ever been allowed to lead England into the field. In most cases, only the amateur can command for he is free of the narrow vision of the expert. Now Indians were not well educated and therefore, by this standard, unfit for responsibility. This was a part of English conviction, but the Indians could not understand this and so felt resentful.

1. Letter to Mrs. Cameron, dated 28 December 1837, quoted in Herbert Edwardes and Herman Merivale, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence* (London, 1873), p. 104.
2. W. S. Blunt, *India under Ripon: A Private Diary* (London, 1909), p. 248.

Anglo-Indian aloofness from Indians can also be ascribed to the fact of class consciousness in English society. 'English was the only European language where accent was determined more by class than by region. The English were the only European people who sorted themselves out by class at meal-times : the masses took their principal meal at midday, their betters in the evening. Even the drinkers of beer divided automatically, between the salon and public bars.'[1] To expect that people who made class distinctions among their own race in their own country would accept the subject people of a different race as their equal is taking idealism beyond the point of common sense.

The English habit of reserve and reticence also worked against free mixing with Indians. The Englishman may please himself by thinking that besides the garrulous American or the gesticulating Frenchman he is a model of dignity and correct behaviour. He may be right, though few foreigners will share his feeling of self-satisfaction. Even today when the imperial sun has set it is difficult to make friends with the English and it takes years of careful relationship to reach the stage of calling each other by Christian names. The Englishman takes his privacy too seriously. In order to avoid exchanging a word with a stranger in the train he will cheerfully bury his face in a newspaper and ignore the charming prospect beyond the window and the friendly human being in the next seat. With such a temperament it is not surprising that he took the Indian to be made of a different clay; it is astonishing that he ruled so large a world for so long.

Thus it was quite in the fitness of things that the British in India should have lived as a separate caste—the Brahmans of the empire. They always remained strangers in India[2]—never colonizing the country, never encouraging assimilation, never entering into the Indian mind and soul. This aloofness, particularly from the educated Indians, had some curious but natural results. A wedge was driven between the administrator and the intelligentsia. Deprived of direct contact with the Englishman, the Indians derived their impressions and knowledge of the English way of life at second hand (from books, journals, newspapers and later films) or from a distance which distorted the view. Inevitably many of them picked up only the baser aspects of Western living—drinking, sexual immorality, haughtiness, an artificial way of living, too much freedom for women, contempt for their own culture, etc. Only

1. A.J.P. Taylor, *English History, 1914-1945* (Oxford, 1965), p. 171.
2. It is not without significance that a well-known Anglo-Indian administrator (Penderel Moon) called one of his books *Strangers in India*.

a few took over the Englishman's virtues, the rest contented themselves with cheap imitation and were happy to strut in borrowed plumes.

* * * *

In the context of Indian history British rule was neither unique nor out of place. The whole cycle of Indian history shows that foreign domination has been the rule rather than the exception. For nearly five thousand years all kinds of people have invaded and ruled India for plunder, power or profit. The British came last in this long line and repeated what history had fashioned into a standard pattern.

The mind is disposed to speculate on the why and whereof of these repeated conquests by foreign races throughout the course of Indian history. Was there some inherent weakness in the Indian character which facilitated the invaders' task? Had the spark of freedom died long ago and with it the shame and pain of slavery? Or, was India such a land of honey and milk and gold that human greed was tempted to master its riches, like the wealthy widow who attracts all kinds of suitors-adventurers? Above all, why was India always so weak and spineless as to lay prostrate before anyone who chose to enter?

The muse of history has a waywardness of its own and does not answer all the questions we ask. Sometimes she responds with the eloquence of an orator, sometimes with the terseness of a prophet, and sometimes with the silence of the wise.

To one question the answer comes clear. There is no evidence to support the popular Indian theory that the invaders of India were nomads and barbarians, untutored in the graces of civilized life, untouched by the hand of culture, blinded by the greed of plunder, a vulgar herd who were strangers to the art of settled government and who gave nothing to India in exchange for the rack and ruin they brought in their train. The Greeks were a civilized race and do not fall into this category. Nor is this description true of the Kushans. The Arabs were nomads by ancestry but far from being primitive. Nor were the men of Ghor and Ghazna upstart barbarians to be dazzled by the splendours of India. The Khaljis and the Tughluqs belonged to great tribes with no mean achievements of their own. The Mughuls, the finest of them all, enjoyed a higher level of civilization than the India they conquered and they gave her the rare gifts of peace, stability and progress. Babur, who founded the Mughul empire, was not a barbarian from the hills as depicted by some Hindu historians whose nationalistic fervour is greater than their respect for truth, but a Barlas Turk whose race had lived under Islamic civilization for six hundred years.

In fact, the contrary is true. The greatest and the most powerful of the barbarians who attempted the conquest of India was the Mongols, and they failed. Chengez Khan touched Multan and then turned to the north-west in search of better weather. Nor could Timur, another nomad of distinction, persuade himself to stay in India and found an empire. It is obvious that the uncivilized invader did not contribute anything to Indian history but the name of a battle or the date of a spoliation. It was the civilized invader who ruled India for a length of time and left an impression on Indian life which his successor could modify but not wipe out.

To the question why India seemed unable or unwilling to stand across the way of the invader and keep the land free of foreign domination history is politely reticent in direct evidence but richly eloquent in hints and indications. Invasion and foreign rule were not brief, isolated interludes in Indian history the bulk of which is made up of foreign domination. There was only one truly Indian empire in these long annals, the Mauryan, which was native in origin and embraced all India. The Guptas never controlled the north which was under the sway of the Sakas and the Kushans. From the earliest historical times till the coming of the British and their European rivals Indian history presents a clear pattern of invasion, settlement, domination, slow deterioration and ultimate disintegration. The same destiny dogs the steps of every invader from Alexander to Babur. Why did these invaders find the conquest of India so easy and why in the end did India have her revenge by prostrating them?

The diversity and disunity of India threw her into the conquering arms of anyone who had the ambition to master her and the strength to make his ambition come true. Provinces fell without a noise. Princes surrendered one by one for want of unity. Principalities welcomed the invader as liberators. Vast tracts of land were captured without a blow of the sword. At the most there were one or two places where determined opposition barred the way, but then one quick battle and the native majority came tumbling down. And a new ruler was raised to the vacant throne to found a fresh empire. For a few hundred years the new overlord and his line ruled with vigour and then there began to appear signs of physical and moral decay. The time was come to pay the penalty for making their home in the heat and dust of India. Weather, like fate, is remorseless and cannot be balked of its revenge. And so in its turn each alien empire fell at the hands of climate and withered away. There is no limit to human folly, and the course of

Indian history is an irrefutable proof of the failure of man to learn from the fate of his ancestors. Only the British, and the British alone, refused to repeat this mistake, but they did this by running away from the Indian sun, not by facing it. They, in their Britannic wisdom and foresight, decided not to settle down in India but instead to rule her from their own distant shores by teams of fresh governors who arrived in the full vigour bred by a cold climate and departed when they were too old to follow the star of duty. Had they lived in India and tried to brave the painful rigours of her seasons the end of their empire would have come all the same, but for entirely different causes. Discretion is, indeed, the better part of valour.

British conquest of India was not the victory of an industrialized state over an unindustrialized one, for at the time of the conquest Britain was in its infancy as an industrial society. It was the victory of a stronger, determined, homogeneous, united nation over a weak, supine, heterogeneous, disunited society without a vestige of patriotic feeling. What interest could south India have in saving the tottering Mughul fabric from European traders and adventurers? The north did not even take notice of the advent of a new race, so busy was it in holding a precarious balance between the Pathans of the Frontier, the Sikhs of the Punjab and the Talpurs of Sind. Ambition and lust for power had split the once great Mughul state into shaky governorships and petty kingdoms which fought and struggled for supremacy as if the fates of empires were at stake. The Indian masses lay as dormant as their arid soil, with no undue attachment to the man who ruled over them and no undue fear of the future. It did not need exceptional strength or rare acumen to bend such a country to one's will. Since long ago it had learnt to bow to every masterful traveller who chose to hold it in bondage.

It is nonsense to say that British rule was based on fear and coercion. A few thousand cannot rule a few million if the will to be ruled is absent. Of course, the Indians did not welcome the British with open arms; there was no reason for that: though some Indians did breathe a sigh of relief on their liberation from the tyranny of their fellow Indians, like the Muslims of the Punjab who had lived in terror under Sikh rule. By and large, however, Indians acquiesced in this latest brand of foreign domination for it accorded with their past. One imperial rule was very much like another and those who had accepted the Greeks and the Kushans, the Pathans and the Turks, found no warrant for resistance in reason, expediency or custom. The habit of

obedience dies hard, and the less worthy the habit the stronger its hold on the sub-conscious.

The habit to command also dies hard. The British are no longer rulers of an empire and the white man's burden no longer bends their shoulders. But their mind is still full of the memories of yesterday. Their press covers developments in former colonies in detail and with nostalgia. There is a flood of publications on Africa, the last imperial prize to fall from their hands. The withdrawal from the east of Suez is under way, but, like men who go on dancing after the music has stopped, they continue to think in imperial terms. The idea of the white man's burden is not dead; it lies dormant and still exercises the mind of those who lived by it for over two centuries.

The incubus of imperialism still possesses the ruler and the ruled of yesterday. The people of India and Pakistan need to be liberated from the instinctive and blind habit of allegiance to the legacy of imperialism: the tradition of seeing virtue in every article on display in the intellectual mart of the West. The British need to be liberated from the old habit of seeing red on the map and of using the old map when the new one is now available. India and Pakistan will become really free when they will be able to think their own thoughts and believe in their own convictions. Britain will cease to be imperial when she has shed her imperial fancy. Ideas rule the world and it is only on the death of one idea that its opposite gains acceptance.

# Longer Notes

## CHAPTER 1

**The Economic Factors in British Imperialism**

Several eminent sources can be cited in support of the theory that the British empire rested firmly on the basis of an economic motive.

The origins of the empire lay in the English need for spices. The Elizabethans lived on salted meat from autumn to spring. Their fresh meat was generally of poor quality. The law compelled them, in the interest of the fisherman, to eat more fish than they liked. With such insipid food as their daily intake their craving for pungent flavourings was but natural. As they had no tea, they also liked heavily-spiced drinks. This 'desire for spices and the difficulty of obtaining them was a chief factor in the jealous contest for the road to India and was long to remain so' [J. Courtenay Locke, ed., *The First Englishmen in India*, New York, 1970 (a reprint of the 1930 London ed.), Introduction, p. 4]. Thus spices were the undoing of India.

The very profitable opium trade in the east was another contributory factor. About the opium trade in Java Sir Thomas Raffles, the founder of Singapore, wrote, 'while in the hands of the [East India] Company it would be the certain source of immediate gain, at the same time as the cause of Humanity would be served by selling the least possible quantity of the poison for the greatest obtainable price' (quoted in Saul Rose, *Britain and South-East Asia*, 1962, p. 29). Rose's comment on this statement: 'To sell as little as possible for the highest possible price is surely the dream of every profiteer' (*Ibid.*, p. 29). And yet Rose calls Raffles a 'liberal' on the same page.

Lugard, himself one of the top-ranking British governors in Africa, admitted in 1893 that British acquisition of that continent was based on

selfishness, not duty. The scramble for Africa, he wrote, 'was due to the growing commercial rivalry, which brought home to civilized nations the vital necessity of securing the only remaining fields for industrial enterprise and expansion.... It is well then to realise that it is for our advantage--and not alone at the dictate of duty—that we have undertaken responsibilities in East Africa. It is in order to foster the growth of trade of this country and to find an outlet for our manufactures and our surplus energy, that our far-seeing statesmen and our commercial men advocate colonial expansion.... I do not believe that in these days our national policy is based on motives of philanthropy only' (F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, 1893, Vol. I, p. 381).

Rhodes believed that the empire was necessary for economic reasons. Writing to W. T. Stead in 1895, he said, 'My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, *i.e.*, in order to save the forty million inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands for settling the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. The Empire, as I have always said, is a question of the stomach. If you do not want civil war, you must become imperialists' (quoted in V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 1947 ed., p. 96).

In 1903 the *Edinburgh Review* noted with approval that the possession of India had afforded to generations of the British upper and middle classes a field for profitable employment. (In a review of Hobson's *Imperialism*, April 1903, p. 356).

In 1907 Milner announced that 'there can be no adequate prosperity for the forty or fifty million people in these islands without the Empire and all that it provides' (Alfred Milner, "Tariff Reform", speech at Tunbridge Wells on 24 October 1907, *The Nation and the Empire*, 1913, pp. 196-197). And a few months earlier he had said that 'these islands by themselves cannot always remain a Power of the very first rank' (Alfred Milner, "The Imperialist Creed", speech at Manchester on 14 December 1906, *ibid.*, p. 140).

In 1935 Winston Churchill warned the people of Britain that 'two million bread-winners in this country would be tramping the streets and queuing up at the Labour Exchanges' if India were given home rule. One-third of the population of the United Kingdom 'would have to go down, out, or under, if we ceased to be a great Empire' (Churchill's broadcast of February 1935 on "The Great Betrayal", quoted in Robert Rhodes James, *Churchill : A Study in Failure 1900-1939*,

1970, p. 201).

**The Nature of British Imperialism**

As the text of this volume presents what may be considered by my readers to be a rather optimistic, perhaps charitable, picture of British imperialism, it is quite in order to mention, with documentation, the dark side of this phenomenon. There was much in British empire-making and -running which was hypocritical, cruel, deceptive and injurious.

In the words of one English student of British imperialism, who incidentally identifies British with 'European' evils, 'Europe's crimes had indeed been, and were to be again, as gigantic as its achievements, and some of them as unparalleled' (V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind*, 1969, p. 19).

In India the British lived extravagantly, even by Indian standards of pomp and show. 'When the Bengal army moved from its base at Firozpur in 1838, it numbered 9,500 combatants, and 38,000 camp followers. One of the officers excelled his fellows by having a train of four horses, eight camels and elephants, and twenty personal servants. Even in actual battle conditions, three elephants carrying, for the use of one officer, a number of double-sided tents with glass doors was thought to be only slightly eccentric' (Michael Edwardes, *Bound to Exile: The Victorians in India*, 1969, p. 17).

Both in civil and military life the British had too many servants to minister to their needs. It was quite common to have one servant for the horse, one or more for the sahib's dogs, one or two for the children; all these besides the usual contingent of cook, bearers, gardeners, water-carriers, doormen, chowkidars, etc. There is much rightful sarcasm in what an Englishwoman wrote from Madras. 'One visitor asked whether the cat had any servants, but I found that she was allowed to wait on herself; and, as she seemed the only person in the establishment capable of so doing, I respected her accordingly' (see J. C. Maitland, *Letters from Madras by a Lady*, 1843).

In spite of the legendary loyalty given by the Indian servant to his British master, it was not rare to see it returned with inhuman cruelty and unforgivable insensitiveness. His slightest fault was 'often visited with blows and such abuse as no respectable man will bear, very often too for no other fault than that of not understanding what the master has said, who has given his directions in some unintelligible stuff, from ignorance of the language, that no one could understand' (Anon., *Indian Domestic Economy and Receipt Book*, 1860, quoted in Michael Edwardes,

*op. cit.*, p. 40).

Such brutality was exercised by all classes of British residents in India, but the tea planters of Assam and Bengal and the indigo planters of Bihar were particularly infamous. When in 1866 the Commissioner of Assam started some prosecutions against a few tea-growers he was surprised at the discovery that such 'cold-blooded revolting cruelty' could be perpetrated by one human being on another. See S. K. Bose, *Capital and Labour in the Indian Tea Industry*, Bombay, 1954, p. 72).

The life of the British soldier in India, so much admired and idealized by Rudyard Kipling, was one long period of enjoyment and indulgence in the lowest pleasures of earthly existence. 'There was, in fact, nothing for him to do. Drunkenness and fornication were his principal activities' (Michael Edwardes, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19).

British rule brought to India a peculiar kind of stagnation in her social and intellectual life. 'In the Moslem States a hereditary aristocracy had hardly existed, and each new generation was new men. But the Moslems, accepting the tradition of the country, had always recreated the court life, and an age died only to be born again: under the British, dead India was to stay dead'. (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, 1947, p. 57).

The same scene meets the eye in other parts of the empire. In Ceylon tea-growing there was a boom from the late 1830s onwards. In the words of a British governor of that island, Lord Torrington, this opportunity to make easy money attracted 'the very worst class of Englishmen', bound to 'lower and degrade our caste and character in the eyes of the natives' (quoted in K. M. de Silva, "The Rebellion of 1848 in Ceylon", *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, Colombo, Vol. 7, 1964, p. 154).

And yet Lord Cromer, one of the high priests of the British imperial creed, could claim that the British 'possess in a very high degree the power of acquiring the sympathy and confidence of any primitive races with which they are brought into contact' (Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, 1910, p. 75).

This huge blind-spot was the result of a British conviction that imperialism was nothing but the rule of civilization over barbarism. Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary in 1895, assured his countrymen that there was no plan at all 'of handing back to barbarism such territory . . . as we may recover for civilization' (quoted in Amales Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge*, Bombay, 1967, p. 90).

To carry the torch of this civilization to the backward peoples and

races was not merely desirable: it was a moral duty. 'Not only British Christianity, culture, industrial and commercial life, but also democracy and law were considered to have reached a perfection hitherto unknown: to export them to less unfortunate people was a moral duty' (Oliver Furley, "The Humanitarian Impact", in C. J. Bartlett, ed., *Britain Pre-Eminent*, 1969, p. 147).

Perhaps it never occurred to the British that this civilization was represented by low-class British soldiers and tea-growers in India and Ceylon, uneducated and grasping farmers in east Africa, and convicted criminals in Australia.

The inevitable happened. British imperial rule carried with it law-courts, a civil service, improved communications, and a knowledge of the English language—but it also carried with it venereal diseases, drunkenness, racial arrogance, warfare and other evils of 'modern civilization'. In the alliterated and expressive phrase of Emily Booth Langworthy, the British gave Africa 'the bottle, the bullet, and the Bible' (E. B. Langworthy, *This Africa was Mine*, Stirling, 1952, p. 15). An English explorer described some torch-bearers of this imperial message to Africa as 'animal-faced Boers, leavened with Jews, parasites, businessmen, nondescripts, and every type of civilized savage' (E. S. Grogan and A. H. Sharp, *From Cape to Cairo*, 1900, p. 21).

The British Superintendent of Education in Tanganyika reported in 1929, 'It is common knowledge that the primitive peoples, after continued contact with the white races, almost invariably deteriorate in art, morale and physique, and become discontented and idle' (writing in *Africa*, Vol. II, 1929, p. 138). Nearly two centuries earlier, in 1746, William Smith had written, 'the discerning Native account it their greatest Unhappiness that they are ever visited by Europeans. They say we Christians introduced the traffic of slaves, and that before our coming they had peace; but, say they, it is observable that whenever Christianity comes, there comes with it a sword, a gun, powder and ball' (quoted in Roy Lewis and Yvonne Foy, *The British in Africa*, 1971, p. 9).

A British author, who wrote on the north-west frontier of India and called himself 'a man of peace', declared it to be Britain's mission 'to spread amongst these savages the power of that great civilizer, the Sword' (W. P. Andrew, *Our Scientific Frontier*, 1880, pp. 54, 74).

Let me confine my comment on this business of imperialism being the advance of civilization to citing two Englishmen. Sir Richard Burton wrote in 1851, 'Whenever good Madam Britannia is about to break the eighth commandment she simultaneously displays a lot of piety, much rhapsodising about the bright dawn of Christianity, the finger

of Providence, the spread of civilization, and the infinite benefits conferred upon barbarians by permitting them to become her subjects, and pay their rent to her' (Richard F. Burton, *Scinde: or the Unhappy Valley*, 1851, Vol. I, p. 182). V. G. Kiernan writes in 1969, 'Things that could not be done in Europe under any government calling itself civilized went on being done in colonial territories' (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 313).

So much for civilizing the uncivilized.

The British were also not beyond employing means of effecting imperial extensions which were as devious as they were dubious. A few instances follow.

Sir Reginald Wingate, as Director of the Egyptian Army Intelligence preparing for the re-conquest of the Sudan, instigated the publication of sensationalist memoirs by refugees from the regime of the Mahdi. The idea was that the circulation of such stuff would poison the British public and its thinking men against the Mahdiyya and thus win approval for a British attack on the Sudan. (For details see Richard Hill, *Slatin Pasha*, 1965, pp. 31-39).

In 1792 Thomas Paine, the celebrated defender of the rights of man, commented on the actions of the East India Company in these words, 'The horrid scene that is now acting [*sic.*] by the English Government in the East Indies is fit only to be told of Goths and Vandals' [Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, ed. by H. B. Bonner, 1907 (Part 2, 1792), p. 146].

Elphinstone, the Anglo-Indian historian, wrote that the British conquest of Sind 'put me in mind of a bully who had been kicked in the street and went home to beat his wife in revenge' (quoted in T. E. Colebrook, *Life of the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone*, 1884). The kicking in the street was a reference to the recent British defeat in Afghanistan.

A modern historian explains the dislike felt by some Britons for the British Indian empire by the fact that it was 'morally tainted by the methods of its acquisition'; 'and indeed what chance would Clive or Warren Hastings have had before the Nuremberg Tribunal?' (G. Wint, *op. cit.*, p. 17).

The British conquest of Burma is another example of British duplicity and greed for power. A modern student of the British empire believes that there was provocation and gross misgovernment, and yet is compelled to acknowledge that 'the British did the job in a ruthless way, thinking only too plainly of the country's teak and oil and rubies, and of the paramount necessity of forestalling the French' (Jack Simmons,

*Britain and the World*, 1965, p. 132).

'The European colonial powers found nothing wrong in occupying and ruling lands belonging to African peoples at the same time as they were elevating almost into a natural law the right of national self-determination for the populations of Europe' (Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, 1968, p. 5).

One horrifying example of stark cruelty may be cited. In the island of Tanna in the Pacific some 'European' settlers left a number of men suffering from measles 'with the deliberate intent of bringing about the depopulation of the island, in order that with the disappearance of the black man the white man may come in and take his place' (James Paton, ed., *John G. Patton, D.D.*, popular ed. 1919, p. 150, cited in Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, 1966, pp. 228-229).

One of the darkest spots in British imperial history is the opium war against China. A contemporary member of parliament made this comment on it, 'I rejoice in peace; I rejoice that this cruel and debasing war is terminated; but I cannot rejoice—it may be unpatriotic, it may be un-British—in our success. We have triumphed in one of the most lawless, unnecessary, and unfair struggles in the records of History; it was a war on which good men could not invoke the favour of Heaven, and the Christians have shed more Heathen blood in two years than Heathens have shed of Christian blood in two centuries' (Lord Shaftesbury, entry in his diary of 23 November 1842, *Life of Lord Shaftesbury*, Vol. I, p. 440, cited in Stephen Neill, *op. cit.*, p. 134; at this time Shaftesbury was Antony Ashley Cooper, Lord Ashley, an M. P.).

On the other hand, the British in general heartily supported and lauded the war. To take one example, W. H. Kingston wrote that though opium was bad the Chinese were equally bad because they had broken a treaty, and if this went unpunished Britain would be leaving them 'to sink into the extreme of barbarism, towards which they appear to be hastening' (W. H. G. Kingston, *The Three Midshipmen*, 1873 ed., chapter 34).

Two modern American historians have come to the defence of the British, thus highlighting the essential Anglo-Saxon unity of outlook on imperial affairs. 'It must be recognized', they write, 'that opium was not the real *cause*, but only the occasion of the war. The true cause lay in the conceited arrogance of the Chinese government, its utter contempt for treaty obligations entered into, the outrageous restrictions placed upon commerce, and the insulting and intolerable treatment of foreigners' (R. H. Glover and J. H. Kane, *The Progress of World Wide Missions*, 2nd. ed., 1960, p. 150).

Stronger words in support of an utterly inexcusable adventure were not used even by the British who forced this unholy war on the Chinese. It is no wonder that today the British proudly point to their 'special relationship' with the United States, and all British governments, Conservative and Labour, have consistently supported American policy in Vietnam.

In West Africa the British used a far from honest method of countering nationalist propaganda of the local population. In the 1940s they decided to deliberately 'invite private companies to establish "reputable newspapers" which might prove an antidote to the anti-imperialist sentiments of local publications' (J. M. Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, Oxford, 1967, p. 49).

A naturalized British journalist of today employs an odd phrase to describe the underhand means used by the British to instigate the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire during and after the first world war. 'German policy', he says, 'always lacked that element of honest hypocrisy which is an essential ingredient of all imaginative statesmanship—and which gave Britain her unique standing in the world, while it lasted' (Jon Kimche, *The Second Arab Awakening*, 1970, p. 37; Kimche is a Swiss, long resident in Britain, and a journalist by profession). 'Honest hypocrisy' is as impossible a phrase as 'a virtuous whore'; it is even more impossible to accept the proposition that such hypocrisy is an 'essential ingredient of all imaginative statesmanship'. It seems that a long exposure to British influence and environment corrupts even the sane and balanced Swiss.

This 'honest hypocrisy' touched its logical limits when MacGregor Laird described a naval gun in the hands of British seamen as a 'moral power'.

It was power—physical power—that the British loved to have and enjoy. In the expressive words of a British army officer, 'and as far as the natives, well, where else will you get such a docile, humble set of slaves? . . . In India there was power—the power of the white man over the black—and power is a fine thing to have' (Harry Flashman, who was in India during 1839-1842, in his autobiography; see *Flashman: From the Flashman Papers 1839-1842*, ed. and arranged by George Macdonald Fraser, 1969, p. 64).

The doctrine of imperial free trade had also a strange element of hypocrisy in it. 'The Free Trade Britain which was reluctant to allow the self-governing colonies to enjoy the benefits of protective tariffs was reluctant to allow India to enjoy the benefits of genuinely free trade' (Donald Southgate, "Imperial Britain", in C. J. Bartlett, *op. cit.*;

p. 167). Not only in politics, but in economics too, a different set of principles applied to India.

Humanitarianism was an important element in British imperial theory. In practice, however, the result was neither imperial humanitarianism nor humanitarian imperialism. Humanitarianism was often used either as an argument to silence the critics of imperial expansion or to disguise imperial ambition in borrowed respectable robes

Between 1835 and 1837 a parliamentary select committee on aborigines worked under Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, and in the public its aims were supported by the Aborigines Protection Society. Its deliberations show how great a part was played by the concepts of 'civilizing zeal' and 'commercial endeavour'. Its conclusion was that a fair and better treatment of the natives would 'promote the civil and commercial interests of Great Britain'. 'Savages are dangerous neighbours and unprofitable customers, and if they remain as degraded denizens of our colonies, they become a burden upon the State'. The most effective remedy was the propagation of Christianity. Christianity and civilization were inseparable, and could only be introduced together; much missionary evidence was adduced in support of this. [See *Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines* (*British Settlements*), Parl. Papers (1837), Vol. VII(1)].

Buxton, who had founded the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade, published in 1840 his book, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy*, in which he said that the aim of the Society was to end the slave trade by the spread of trade, Christianity and treaties. He stated that all Christian powers should unite to 'call into action the dormant energies of Africa', but if they did not come forth, Britain alone should do it. He claimed that Africans from Senegambia to Benin already wished to have the British as neighbours. The British would not declare their sovereignty over their areas but the British Government would supply a police force sufficient to protect persons and property. Christian teachings would be spread along with technical training. He suggested that Britain should utilize the new wave of missionary zeal of Christian negroes of the West Indies who were keen to go to Africa.

On the pretence of humanitarianism in the British imperial idea the comments of a present-day British writer are apt, 'Among the agents of expanding trade and empire who called in humanitarianism to dress their actions in acceptable attire, ulterior motives could often be perceived, showing the dress to be pretty threadbare, (Oliver Furley, "The Humanitarian Impact", in C. J. Bartlett, *op. cit.*, p. 128). And

'anti-slave trade zeal was in some areas used as an excuse for territorial acquisitions, for example the Gold Coast forts in the 1840s and Lagos in 1861' (*ibid.*, p. 132).

As a result of the British anti-slave trade movement, the power and authority of the Sultan of Zanzibar in East Africa were destroyed, 'and the last remnants of the slave trade in the exterior provided an excuse for the British to extend their sphere of influence in East Africa just when the "scramble" for Africa was on. As in West Africa, the anti-slave trade campaign led to the acquisition of territory, whether by design or not' (*ibid.*, p. 134). 'Most of the British Protestant churches, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and others who supported the anti-slave trade campaign, formed missionary societies at the same time, and sent out pioneers to evangelise both the slaves and free inhabitants in the West Indies, South and West Africa, India, Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific' (*ibid.*, p. 134). 'The Moravians, a mixed German and British mission, actually owned a slave plantation in Jamaica' (*ibid.*, p. 135). 'Indeed, many missionaries held that Christian convert would be a better slave' (*ibid.*, p. 135).

Even E. D. Morel, a prominent 'humanitarian' who took the side of the Africans against the excesses of the imperial power in the Congo, had no doubt that colonial rule as practised by the British was necessary for the Africans (see E. D. Morel, *Nigeria: Its Peoples and Problems*, 1912). Thus did the humanitarians preach imperialism.

With such evidence from the British sources themselves (and I have given only a selection of it here), we can conclude that more often than not humanitarianism was a handmaiden of Christian propaganda and imperial expansion.

# CHAPTER 2

**Classical Influence on British Imperialism**

'We still often look at Asia through the eyes of those Greeks, or fancy we are doing so while really making them look through ours. In the nineteenth century triumphant Europe saw Alexander's army, carrying Western civilization into Asia, as its vanguard. Governors and generals went out east with their heads stuffed with the classics, determined to find Asian rulers of the same breed as Xenophon's slippery satraps' (V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind*, 1969, p. 3).

**Use of the Word 'Imperialism' in England**

'We have been of late much perplexed by a new word. "imperialism", which has crept in amongst us' (Fourth Earl of Carnarvon, speaking to a large Edinburgh audience in 1878; an address entitled "Imperial Administration" to the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution on 5 November 1878; printed in *Fortnightly Review*, December 1878, p. 760; also reported in *The Times*, 6 November 1878).

**British Institutions of Imperial Study and Propaganda**

The Imperial Federation League was established in November 1884 to 'secure by Federation the permanent unity of the Empire'. Its founding members included W. E. Forster, Edward Stanhope, Froude, John Seeley, Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, Sir Henry Parker and, of course, Lord Rosebery. During the last years of the eighteen eighties and the early 'nineties it was the centre for all imperial discussion and thinking. It opened and maintained several branches in the empire, especially in Canada and South Africa. Its most ardent missionary was

a Canadian, George Parkin. An avowedly propagandist organization, it issued a monthly periodical, *Imperial Federation*, which first appeared in 1886. Its most important achievement was the summoning of the 1887 Colonial Conference. In 1886, at the time of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, it sponsored an unofficial conference at which papers on imperial problems were read. The Exhibition itself was the work of the League.

The British press of the late nineteenth century was also a powerful medium of propagating the imperial doctrine. W. E. Henley, an aggressive imperialist, made the *National Observer*, which he edited from 1888 to 1893, the literary organ of the imperial message. The paper 'played a considerable part in promoting the legend of late Victorian imperialism. It published, among other things, *Barrack Room Ballads*; and during the years when he was editing it Henley himself emerged as a Bard of Empire' (John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, 1969, p. 151). In the 'eighties W. T. Stead re-made the *Pall Mall Gazette* into a loud imperial drum beater. In 1896 Alfred Harmsworth founded his *Daily Mail*, which soon became the most powerful daily organ of imperial jingoism. In 1900 Arthur Pearson founded the *Daily Express* whose first leader, dated 24 April, announced, 'Our policy is patriotic; our policy is the British Empire'.

Sydney and Beatrice Webb founded, in early November 1902, a group they called 'The Co-efficients' for serious discussion of social and imperial problems and for formulation of policy on these matters. It contained prominent persons from the political, academic and literary life of the country. For five or six years it flourished as a dining club, but soon lost its momentum and influence. (See L. S. Amery, *My Political Life*, Vol. I, 1953, pp. 223-231; H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography*, 1934, Vol. I, pp. 761-771; and Bernard Semmell, *Imperialism and Social Reform*, 1960, pp. 72-82).

Mainly as a reaction to 'The Co-efficients' a group calling itself 'The Compatriots' was founded in January 1904. Starting with only twelve members, later it expanded to a membership of a hundred. Discussions were held, public dinners were arranged, lectures were delivered and speeches were published. For about ten years the group was active and also effective. Its founder was Leonard Amery, who later became a Secretary of State for India in Churchill's Government during the second world war. Members included Leo Maxse, editor of *National Review*, H. J. Mackinder, geographer and later principal of the London School of Economics, J. L. Garvin, the journalist, John Buchan, the imperial novelist and politician, F. S. Oliver, Joseph Chamberlain, Alfred

Lyttelton, and Milner. (For more details see L. S. Amery, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 1953, pp. 264-269).

Another significant movement was that of the Empire Day. It was founded in 1904 by Lord Meath to 'arouse interest in the need for promoting imperial education and knowledge, particularly through schools, so that rising generations might be fully conscious of their Empire heritage, privileges and responsibilities' (the words are those of a handout of the Movement). The first public meetings to promote the Empire Day were held in London in 1904. In 1908 the House of Commons rejected by 68 votes a proposal for official recognition of such a day. It was only in 1916 that Meath obtained the Government's support for the Day—a decade after it had become a statutory holiday in most Dominions; it was the first world war that had brought it recognition in Britain. It was also in 1916 that the British Government agreed to fly the Union Jack from public buildings on 24 May—the Empire Day.

In 1913 a Committee took over the day to day running of the Empire Day Movement; and in 1922 it became affiliated to the Royal Colonial Institute. At the end of 1945 this connection was terminated, and the Empire Day Movement adopted its own constitution. It also published its own quarterly journal, *New Empire*. In 1958 the Empire Day was changed into a Commonwealth Day, and the Movement took offices with the Imperial Institute in South Kensington. It disappeared as an independent movement in 1962. (Information derived from J. O. Springhall, "Lord Meath, Youth, and the Empire", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. V, No. 4, 1970, pp. 105-107).

The most important contribution of the Movement was the popularization of the Empire in schools. The Empire Day was celebrated in the schools chiefly by hoisting and saluting the flag. 'This was to be followed by an assembly of local dignitaries and an address on citizenship or a short lecture on the Empire. Then came a recitation from Kipling and the singing of the national anthem. Throughout the week special lessons were to be given on imperial topics, for example, history and geography were given an Empire bias during the Empire Day Week. The emphasis was on a continuing process of indoctrination. By the 1930s everything had become more streamlined and ample. Schools could choose from among an Empire Service, the performance of an Empire play or pageant, an exhibition of Empire products, film and slide lectures, a school concert, a recitation of heroic English poems, an Empire Day wireless programme, a display of imperial flags in the playground and the observance of the slogan "Empire Meals on Empire

Day". In addition, the traditional speeches and Assemblies were continued; for the children there was the compensation of the half day holiday which some schools were granted' (*ibid.*, p. 108).

A more literary effort to make the concept and glory of the Empire popular was the publication, in 1906, of Cassell's *Illustrated History of England* in ten volumes. In the words of the *History*, 'maps of the world, with the British possessions coloured red, hung on the walls of all the school-rooms; and it is a trite, yet none the less tremendous, fact that the sun never sets on the school-rooms of the Queen of England. And in those school-rooms the children of the Empire gained their first perception of Imperialism. [Without the civilizing mission of British imperialism]... the greater portion of the world outside Europe would revert to the darkness and barbarism of the Middle Ages' (Vol. IX, pp. 195-196).

Besides this Cassell history, some other school history text-books served the same end: Collins school series, *The Story of Britain*, Books IV and V, Junior and Intermediate, 1905; Collins *Young Briton's History Readers*, 3 vols; H. P. Arnold-Foster, *History of England*, 1904, and his *The Citizen Reader*, 1904; and J. St. Loe Strachey, *The Citizen and the State*, Part 2, 1904. On the joint impact of such publications a recent scholar comments, 'Stale slogans and cliches constantly bombard the reader until he accepts their message with a tired acquiescence. "Citizenship", "Empire", and "Patriotism" form the Holy Trinity of the imperialist text-book authors, and by constant repetition they lose their emotive currency as propaganda terms' (J. O. Springhall, *op. cit.*, p. 103).

One imperial body of much influence and reputation was the Round Table Movement which was formally organized in early September 1909. The founding members were Lionel Curtis, F. S. Oliver, Lord Anglesey, Lovat Robert Brand, Philip Kerr (later Marquess of Lothian), William Marris, George Craik, R. Martin Holland, Lord Howick and Lord Wolmer. It enjoyed the powerful backing of the Rhodes Trust, and issued the quarterly called *Round Table*.

The tenacity of the imperial idea is proved by the lateness of the hour when these empire bodies reluctantly decided to change their nomenclature. As we saw above, the Empire Day (24 May) was not re-named Commonwealth Day until 1959. *The Empire Youth Annual*, a book for children printed by the Gawthorn Press, changed its title to *Commonwealth and Empire Annual* only in 1953. The Royal Empire Society became the Royal Commonwealth Society in 1959, and its organ, *United Empire*, was published under this title till 1957.

**India and the Colonial and Imperial Conferences**

The first Colonial Conference was convened in 1887. It was designated 'Colonial' rather than 'Imperial' perhaps because India was not represented on it. A Committee of Indians representing 'the non-official Indian community' in London wrote to the India Office on 15 April 1887, seeking permission to send a representative to attend the Conference. They were informed on 9 May that it was not intended that India shall be represented at the Conference. (Commonwealth Office file no. 323/368/9091, quoted in J. E. Kendle, *Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911*, 1967, p. 8 fn. 2).

When Joseph Chamberlain called the next Colonial Conference in 1902, he followed the 1887 precedent in confining participation to the self-governing Dominions. However, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce had been exerting pressure on the India Office for some Indian representation, and under the pressure of the Secretary of State for India Chamberlain agreed to permit a representative of the India Office, Thomas Holderness, to attend those sessions of the Conference in which India was interested. As the final decision on this matter was not given until 21 July, Holderness missed the first three meetings, but attended five of the remaining seven: those of 22 July, and 1, 5, 8 and 11 August 1902 (*ibid.*, p. 49).

In the 1907 Colonial Conference India was again represented by members from the India Office: Morley himself, the Secretary of State, Sir James Mackay, a member of the Council of India, and Thomas Holderness, an India Office official; Lord Elgin called them 'assessors'. Although Mackay was present at all meetings but one, Indian representation was still limited and indirect. The India Office people submitted a memorandum on 'preferential tariffs in their relation to India' and presented the Indian point of view on the subject of preference (*ibid.*, p. 89).

For some time before the meeting of the 1911 Imperial Conference (note the change in name) some members of British parliament had been lobbying for Indian representation, but to no avail. The participation was restricted to 'autonomous governments'. When the Conference met India made only one short appearance in which the Secretary of State for India, Marquess of Crewe, accompanied by Sir Herbert Risley, an India Office official, attended the eleventh meeting on 19 June and addressed the session on the question of Indian immigration to the Dominions. (For lobbying by members of parliament, see H. C. 23. 5S, 6 April 1911, cols. 2419-2420, and H. C. 26. 5S, 2 June 1911, cols. 1433-1434; for Crewe's appearance at the Conference, see *Imperial Confe-*

*rence—Minutes of proceedings*, Cd. 5745, 1911, pp. 394-399).

India was present in its own right at the 1923 Imperial Conference. British duplicity in handling the two Indian delegates comes out in the following entry in the diary of Thomas Jones, then Deputy Secretary to the British Cabinet. 'Then saw [Sir Maurice] Hankey [Secretary to the Cabinet] who was wrath with the two Indian delegates because of the rumour that they might walk out of the Conference if they got nothing. Hankey thought it a mistake to have allowed them in at all—he would let them walk out or he would not give an answer to their demands until the very last day, when it would be too late to walk out' (Thomas Jones, *Whitehall Diary, Vol. I, 1916-1925*, 1969, entry of 18 October 1923, p. 248).

# CHAPTER 3

**The Element of Race in British Imperialism**

Race feeling was an exceedingly important element of British imperialism, both in theory and practice, and therefore it seems in order to look at the supporting evidence at some length. In this note I will treat the issue by, first, looking at the racial views of some prominent British thinkers, politicians and administrators, secondly, citing some examples of racial discrimination in British India, thirdly, briefly referring to some cases of racial practices in other parts of the British empire, fourthly, comparing British and French views on the racial question, and, finally, showing that the British have by no means lost their feeling of racial superiority with the disappearance of their empire.

In 1862 Robert Knox published his *The Races of Man*, in which he justified imperial expansion and poured scorn on humanitarian efforts to lessen the shock of colonialism for subject races. He laughed at the 'mock philanthropy' of England. Inferior races, he said, were destined to be subject races. His book was influential, and the new imperialism which grew soon afterwards had a definite basis on this type of racialist assumptions.

The extinction of the native races under Western rule in the New Hebrides, Australia and North America, was described by Sir Charles Dilke as 'not only a law of nature, but a blessing to mankind' (C. W. Dilke, *Greater Britain*, 8th. ed., 1885, p. 88).

Lord Rosebery underlined the connection between race and imperialism when he said, 'An Empire such as ours requires as its first condition an imperial race—a race vigorous and industrious and intrepid' (Rosebery, *Miscellanies: Literary and Historical*,

1921, Vol. II, p. 250).

In 1841, describing his daily routine to a friend in England, Herbert Edwardes, who is so much praised by his compatriots for his understanding of the Indian people and for his good work in Bannu, referred to his servant as 'a black rascal'. (See Lady Edwardes, *Memorials of the Life and Letters of Major-General Sir Herbert B. Edwardes*, 1886).

The two leading exponents of British Social-Darwinism were Benjamin Kidd and Karl Pearson, both of whom asserted that England's first concern was with the welfare of her own people, at the expense, if necessary, of other 'inferior' peoples. It is both inevitable and right, wrote Kidd, for European nations to want to exploit Africa's resources. It is inevitable because the greater 'energy, enterprise and social efficiency' of the northern races are 'part of the cosmic order of things'. It is right because it is 'inexpedient' to allow such a large and rich region of the globe to remain undeveloped. The tropics, therefore, 'must be administered from the temperate regions'. (Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution*, 1894, pp. 316-317). 'The tropics in such circumstances can only be governed as a trust for civilization'. (Benjamin Kidd, *The Control of the Tropics*, 1898, p. 53). (See also his *Individualism and After*, Oxford, 1908; and Karl Pearson, *The Ethics of Free Thought*, 1901, and *National Life from the Standpoint of Science*, 1905. On Pearson see E. S. Pearson, *Karl Pearson: An Appreciation of Some Aspects of His Life and Work*, Cambridge, 1938).

Racial superiority was taken so much for granted that even a sympathetic student of the aboriginal races could see no contradiction in his life-long work and his Anglo-Saxon racial arrogance. 'It was the mission of the Anglo-Saxon race', wrote Thomas Hodgkin in 1896, 'to penetrate into every part of the world, and to help in the great work of civilization .... Native races were like children; they must be protected against the superior brain power of the races which had reached maturity.' [Thomas Hodgkin, *The Aborigines' Friend* (Journal of the Aborigines Protection Society, London), July 1896, quoted in Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire*, 1968, pp. 50-51].

A like blindness to logic was shown by Mary Kingsley, a well-known humanitarian, who strongly believed in the African's inferiority. The evidence she offered was his failure to produce by his own unaided effort scientific or artistic achievements to compare with those of Europe. '. . . remember that, unless under white direction, the African has never made an even fourteenth rate piece of cloth, or pottery, or a machine, tool, picture, sculpture, and that he has never risen to the level of picture-writing'. (Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, 1897,

p. 670). To her the railway engine was 'the manifestation of the superiority of my race' (Mary Kingsley, *West African Studies*, 1899, p. 330).

Arthur Balfour, who was prime minister of Britain from 1902 to 1905, declared in the House of Commons in 1906, 'We have to face facts; men are not born equal, the white and black races are not born with equal capacities: they are born with different capacities which education cannot and will not change' (H. C. 4S. 162, col. 799).

The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific wrote in an official report on the extinction of the native population in the New Hebrides under foreign rule, 'The cause of the extinction is the old one, *i.e.*, the incapacity of the native race . . . to change from their old habits and ways of thought, and to adopt and adapt the European habits and ways of thought which must prevail in the struggle for existence'. [Report issued as a supplement to *Parliamentary Papers* (1907), Vol. LVI, Cd. 3288, p. 75].

Nor was Winston Churchill above this racial feeling. His 'acceptance of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority had been evident in his period at the Colonial Office in 1906-08, and can be seen in *My African Journey*'. (Robert Rhodes James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure 1900-1939*, 1970, p. 213 fn. 1).

Lord Irwin, so much a hero, even of the Hindus, for his Christian humility and goodness of heart, had this to say in his maiden speech in the House of Commons on 15 June 1910, '. . . while we on our side most emphatically disclaim any attempt permanently to hold down the black races, we do at the same time insist that, if our position in these countries is to be maintained, it can only be as it is at the present moment, by maintaining the position and fulfilling the functions of a superior race'. (Quoted in A. Campbell-Johnson, *Viscount Halifax: A Biography*, 1941, p. 73).

Similar ideas were expressed by an economist-*cum*-lecturer-*cum*-priest. William Cunningham lectured at Cambridge, London and Harvard, was Vicar of Greater St. Mary's from 1887 to 1908, and Archdeacon of Ely from 1908 to 1919. In 1911 he wrote that vigorous and healthy Englishmen were needed to replenish the population of the self-governing dominions so that they can be made fit to take up 'the white man's burden in the dependencies'. (William Cunningham, *The Case against Free Trade*, 1911, pp. 136-137. For his life see H. S. Foxwell and Lilian Knowles, "Archdeacon Cunningham", obituary, *Economic Journal*, September 1919, pp. 382-393, and Audrey Cunningham, *William Cunningham: Teacher and Priest*, 1950).

Lord Milner, in a speech delivered in East London on 4 December

1912, said that the British race 'stands for something distinctive and priceless in the onward march of humanity' (Alfred Milner, "The Two Nations", *The Nation and the Empire*, 1913, p. 496). And again, 'I have emphasized the importance of the racial bond. From my point of view this is fundamental. It is the British race which built the empire, and it is the undivided British race which can alone uphold it' (*ibid.*, p. xxxv).

Lionel Curtis, the professional constitution-maker, a 'liberal' and a self-confessed friend of India, wrote to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India, on 2 November 1916, that all settlement of Asiatics among white people was an evil (cited in Max Beloff, *Imperial Sunset, Vol. I: Britain's Liberal Empire 1897-1921*, 1969, p. 199 fn. 5).

At a dinner in honour of the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford, in 1924 Lord Leverhulme spoke these words, 'Now the organizing ability is the particular trait and characteristic of the white man . . . . I say with my little experience, that the African native will be happier, produce the best, and live under conditions of prosperity when his labour is directed and organized by his white brother who has these millions of years' start ahead of him' (quoted in *West Africa*, 26 July 1924).

I think enough has been said above to show that a feeling of racial superiority was a part of the Briton's moral and intellectual equipment. After looking at these frank and frequent expressions of the feeling it should not surprise anyone to find that a most despicable variety of racial discrimination, oppression and cruelty was widely practised in all parts of the British empire.

Let us take India first. The British rulers of India always claimed that one of their greatest contributions to Indian progress was the establishment of the rule of law and equal justice in the sub-continent. But we have a very large number of revolting cases in which justice stood aghast but powerless before blatant racial discrimination in its dispensation. A few examples will show this. On one occasion, some British soldiers assaulted and wounded a young boy. When the villagers threatened to retaliate the local English magistrate acquitted the soldiers, sent the villagers to prison for long terms, and had the injured boy whipped. (Michael Edwardes, *Bound to Exile: The Victorians in India*, 1969, p. 202).

At another place an English planter was fined thirty rupees as punishment for the murder of his coachman. In 1901 two English planters 'in order to obtain a confession of theft from a native Syce or groom, tied him up to a tree and flogged him to such an extent that he died in the evening of the same day'. They buried him two miles away

to escape discovery. When the crime was unearthed and the criminals tried, the planters community subscribed £1000 for their defence. They were sentenced to three years' imprisonment. (*Ibid.*, p. 136; the quotation is from B. B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes*, 1961). In the first case, when the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, heard of it, he suspended the magistrate who had given the sentence of a fine of a paltry amount. But Lytton 'did not think the matter of much importance. To him it was an administrative failure, a "twopenny halfpenny case", as he wrote to the editor of *The Times* (*ibid.*, pp. 144-145).

In a letter to the Secretary of State, Sir Charles Wood, written from Calcutta on 22 June 1862, the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, said, 'The other day a station-master somewhere up country, kicked a native who was, as he says, milking a goat belonging to the former. The native fell dead, and the local paper, without a word of commiseration for the victim or his family, complains of the hardship of compelling the station-master to go to Calcutta, in this warm weather, to have the case inquired into. Other instances in which the natives have died from the effect of personal chastisement administered by Europeans [*sic.*] have occurred since I have been here.' (Theodore Walrond, ed., *Letters and Journals of James, Eighth Earl of Elgin*, 1872, p. 417). The reader will notice two things: the viceroy's attempt to confuse the 'British' in India with the 'Europeans' and the chilling, matter-of-fact, unconcerned, almost light hearted, tone of the last sentence. If the ultimate British authority in India could be so calm in this matter, the attitude of the lower officialdom can well be imagined.

Dishonesty and racial discrimination were combined when the average station doctor in India, who was British, treated only the British and refused to see the natives, though he was paid 'head money' for every Indian soldier in the garrison. (See Michael Edwardes, *op. cit.*, p. 74).

Under the Morley-Minto Reforms an Indian was, for the first time, appointed to the viceroy's executive council. John Morley, the Secretary of State for India, was opposed to this innovation on self-admitted racial grounds, and he was supported in this by Austen Chamberlain, a future Secretary of State for India. 'I was dead against it', wrote Chamberlain in his diary on 15 March 1907, 'we could not admit equality. White men could not and ought not to submit to coloured rule . . . . Morley said he pretty much agreed with my conclusions, though not with all my reasons. He knew he would not submit to be governed by a man of colour'. (A. Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside: An Epistolary Chronicle 1906-1914*, 1936 ed., pp. 59-60). The King, Edward VII, also found the

reforms distasteful and vigorously opposed the appointment of the first Indian member of the executive council. (See Philip Magnus, *King Edward VII*, 1964, p. 425; Maurice V. Brett, ed., *Reginald, Viscount Esher, Letters and Journals*, 1934, Vol. II, p. 372; and Frank Hardie, *The Political Influence of the British Monarchy, 1868-1952*, 1970, p. 86). How this arrangement worked in practice is shown by what Sir John Hewett wrote to Lord Milner on 8 June 1916, '. . . the introduction of an Indian into the Executive Council resulted—as everyone who thought about it foretold — in ordinary members of the Council seeing fewer papers than they did before — you can't show secret documents from the British Foreign Office to an Indian councillor'. (Milner Papers, quoted in Max Beloff, *op. cit.*, p. 196 fn. 2).

When the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were being evolved and publicly debated, the *Morning Post*, a conservative daily, wrote an editorial on 17 July 1918, in which it said, 'At present we govern India; the proposal is that Indians should govern our officials. The idea of Asiatics controlling Englishmen may be native to the mind of Mr. Montagu: it is repugnant to British instincts. There is in fact no compromise possible: no white man of good type would accept such a situation.'

Until 1925 there were separate toilets marked for the British and Indian members of the Indian Legislative Assembly in the assembly chamber at Delhi. (Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru and After*, 1969, p. 87).

One modern British historian has pleaded an unbelievably absurd excuse in defence of British racial practices in India which may be mentioned in passing. Kiernan, an Edinburgh academic, says that 'if Hindus complained of being looked down on, they could always be reminded that their own treatment of one another, especially of untouchables, was worse'. And, 'An Indian environment was likely to magnify it, since Hindus themselves were acutely conscious of race, in the form of *varna*—colour or caste—and Bengalis, largely, non-Aryan in origin, attached an inflated importance to shades of complexion' (V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind*, 1969, pp. 34, 43). Kiernan ought to have known that Hindus were not the only inhabitants of India, that one people's misbehaviour provides no justification for another people doing the same, and that British racial arrogance was equally visible in other parts of the empire where Hindus were not to be found.

The Australians have always been the most race conscious in the British commonwealth, as is evident from their present-day racial policy of immigration. At the 1919 Peace Conference at Paris it was Australia

which opposed and frustrated a Japanese proposal for a statement of the principle of equal rights of all races.

In late nineteenth century a brother of Gilbert Murray's stayed with a man in Queensland 'who showed him a particular bend of a river where he had once, in a jest, driven a black family, man, woman, and children, into the water among a shoal of crocodiles'. (See G. Murray, "The Exploitation of Inferior Races in Ancient and Modern Times", in F. W. Hirst, *et. al.*, *Liberalism and the Empire*, 1900, p. 154, and other pages where he details some more horrors of which he had family knowledge).

General Smuts, one of the makers of the modern British commonwealth, at a meeting of the 1921 Imperial Conference, refused to contemplate any equality of treatment between Indians and white citizens of the empire. (Minute of a meeting of the Imperial Conference held at the Colonial Office, London, on 15 July 1921, Cabinet Papers, cited in Max Beloff, *op. cit.*, p. 312).

In West African British possessions even the missionaries 'who preach that the black man is a brother decline emphatically to receive him as a brother-in-law. That there should be any mingling of the races is unthinkable'. (See Mary Gaunt, *Alone in West Africa*, 1912).

In the Sudan the British preferred to deal with the 'nigger' with a stick. Sir Rudolph Salatin said that 'the nigger is a lazy beast and must be compelled to work'. Asked how, he replied, 'With a stick'. (Quoted in F. W. Hirst, *op. cit.*, p. 135).

No better conditions prevailed in East Africa. Even in the mid-1950s there was in Kenya a European political movement, the Federal Independence Party, 'whose policy was rooted in the Bantustan theory, with all the elements of polite apartheid'. The party 'believes that separation will bring co operation. We believe that integration will bring destruction and misery to all'. (John S. Roberts, *A Land Full of People: Life in Kenya Today*, 1967, pp. 110-111). It needs no imagination to picture another South Africa in Kenya had the British been able to stay there longer. During the ten years before independence more capital was invested in Kenya in European education, representing 3 per cent of the population, than in education of the African 97 per cent. (See *Kenya Education Commission Report*, Nairobi, December 1964). This was the British way of training the subject races in self-government.

Aden presented a similar picture. There the British 'are not interested in the local people as human beings', said a former British Governor of the colony, 'but always as potential or actual customers for their merchandise, or as passengers on their ships, or as servants in their

houses. They only mix with them socially when it is unavoidable'. (Sir T. Hickinbotham, *Aden*, 1958, p. 201; he was governor of Aden in 1951-56).

In Penang racial discrimination reached the limits of reckless cruelty. During the second world war when evacuation became necessary owing to Japanese advance, 'the traditional principle of "women and children first" underwent a modification to read "European women and children first". Only after the European population had been taken off were instructions issued that in any further evacuation there was to be no distinction of race'. (Saul Rose, *Britain and South-East Asia*, 1962, p. 98).

Discrimination was practised even within the army where the Indian soldiers and officers were expected to fight for the British Empire. Before the second world war, in Singapore the only mixed club of English and Asians was one of conjurors. And just before the Japanese invasion of Singapore a large garrison of the Indian army was stationed there. British officers of this garrison were invited to use the swimming pool of the fashionable country club, but Indian officers were debarred: at a time when these Indians held the same King's commission that was held by their English colleagues. (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, 1947, p. 209).

In 1864 Edward John Eyre, the governor of Jamaica, put down a revolt in the colony with heartless and inhuman savagery. When British soldiers came to a native village, they burnt it. When they met a black man, they flogged him if he stopped, shot him if he ran. The Deputy Adjutant General reported to his superior, 'Hole is doing splendid service, shooting every black man who cannot account for himself (60 on the line of march)'. A private soldier wrote to his parents in Hampshire, 'I must tell you that I never see such a site before as we are taking the prisoners by a hundred per day—we saved them for the next morning to have some sport with them. We tied them up to a tree and give them 100 lashes, and afterwards put a shot into their heads.' 'One captured rebel was used as a rifle target, the firing party shooting him at 400 yards. A servant of Bogle's was tied to an officer's stirrup and made to divulge the names of rebel conspirators. . . . A woman at Stony Gut was flogged to reveal Bogle's whereabouts: she got 25 lashes first, another 25 a quarter of an hour later, another 25 half an hour later still, and was then left all night with a rope around her neck as an earnest of things to come. . . . 439 negroes were shot or hanged. Some 600 more were flogged, mostly without trial, and about 1,000 dwellings were destroyed . . . by our standards the means were unjustifiable—400 lives for 17, thousands of innocent people humiliated, thousands were made homeless,

the law flouted, human rights abused. . . . His [Eyre's] manipulation of justice was certainly unforgivable, and on the face of it his whole conduct seemed to express a contempt for the Negro, and a suspicion of their intentions, that jarred against his treatment of the aborigines in his youth.'

What happened to Eyre on his return to England in August 1866? A Jamaican Committee was established to bring him to book; it contained such well-known figures as John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley. An Eyre Defence Committee appeared in opposition, boasting an even more prominent membership: Carlyle, Ruskin, Trollope, Dickens, Tennyson and Charles Kingsley. Three times the controversy reached as far as the law courts. Each time Eyre was cleared of all blame. In the end the Government gave him a pension as a retired colonial governor. (All quotations are from James Morris, "Eyre: A Portrait", *Encounter*, July 1970, pp. 3-13).

If we compare British racial outlook and practice with those of other European imperial powers of that day we find that the Portuguese alone followed in British footsteps—and even they with some significant differences. When the Portuguese were installed in Goa, the viceroy, Affonso d'Albuquerque, realised that if a Christian dominion was to be maintained in the East, it was imperative to have a Christian population on the spot. Therefore, he 'invited his men to marry the "white and beautiful" widows and daughters of the defenders of Goa whom they had killed in battle or subsequently burned alive. This was intended to be a regular Christian marriage with women of position. In point of fact, irregular cohabitation [*sic.*] with women of a very different type and particularly with slave girls, became almost the rule'. Albuquerque 'made a clear distinction between the fairer races of north India and of the Middle East, and the darker Dravidian races of the south; Dravidians were more frequently referred to as "negresses".' (Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, 1966, pp. 71-72, 71 fn.).

The Dutch in Indonesia behaved very differently from the British in India. A British scholar himself tells us that 'it was impossible' for the Dutch 'to look down ostentatiously on all "native", as the British did in India. Intermarriage was not disreputable; a mixed population continued to grow, and Eurasians, if not fully on a par with Europeans, were not publicly rejected'. (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 90).

We have the same British scholar's testimony on the stark contrast between British and French racial policies. 'France was, thanks to 1789, socially more modern and democratic than Britain. A Briton of low degree could become rich, but he could not become a gentleman. It went

logically with this that a British colonial subject could not rise in the scale of humanity beyond a certain point. In France, anyone who accepted the established order of society could rise by his talents to any level; similarly a colonial subject who accepted French ascendancy could be lifted up by it and shake off all his clogs. It was one further inducement to accept him as a fellow-Frenchman that France was suffering from a low birth rate, while its European rivals increased and multiplied'. (*Ibid.*, p. 94).

During a visit to Algeria in 1858 another Englishman was much impressed with the French attitude towards North Africans and contrasted this with the rudeness of the British that had offended their Turkish allies in the Crimean War. (See H. M. Walmsley, *Sketches of Algeria during the Kabyle War*, 1858, p. 116). Anyone who reads L. Daudet's novel, *Le Nabob* (1877), will at once realise that no English writer ever drew a character like his Nabob.

French rule in West Africa, where the subject race was undoubtedly non-white, indicates the same liberal and race-free attitude. Here are some findings of an English student of colonial rule in West Africa. 'The French were much more tolerant of their officials having relations with African women than the British'. 'The British administrator reacted violently to the educated African in a way his French counterpart did not'. 'The French, however, were less closed in their aristocracy than the British. More Africans were admitted to positions of actual equality with the French than ever with the British before the second world war'. (Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, 1968, pp. 394, 397, 398).

W. E. Dubois, after a visit to Dakar, wrote, 'there is nothing here in French West Africa like the open race repulsion, the studied separation that one sees in British West Africa. . . . Black France is the most hopeful meeting place of black and white in the world'. (W. E. Dubois, "France's Black Citizens in West Africa", *Current History*, July 1925, pp. 561, 564; Dubois was a prominent American Negro pan-Africanist).

If any reader has the impression that racialism, being a part of British imperial thinking, disappeared with the empire, the following should clear this misunderstanding. In 1947 an English writer on the empire declared, '. . . no Oriental can even now spend a week in this country without meeting some vexatious reminder that his colour causes embarrassment'. And then he excused his people by pleading that 'in England this is not due to any assertion of racial superiority, but follows from a lack of knowledge of the East and fear of the unfamiliar'. (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, 1947, p. 209).

The article on Negroes in the 1949-50 edition of the British reference publication, the *Everyman's Encyclopaedia*, describes them as 'thievish and indolent by nature, their ready submission to authority and their apparent devotion to their masters is unreliable'.

The British identification of the road to self-government with an increased familiarity with the British way of life was given a racial tinge by *The Times* when, in an editorial of 22 June 1949, it wrote, 'The people under temporary tutelage shall be enabled and encouraged to participate in the more sophisticated culture and political development of the ruling race'.

Most of us are familiar with the racial foundations of recent British immigration laws. An English historian admits that the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 'had psychological effects on the whole basis of Commonwealth relations, because not only did the colonial peoples realise that the British at home were prepared to operate a "colour bar", but also the British themselves had to acknowledge their own prejudices through the widespread support which a policy of immigration control had received'. (J. M. Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, Oxford, 1967, p. 238; see also the *Guardian* of 12 November 1963).

It must be remembered that Britain is the only country in the world to have two kinds of passports: one for its white citizens, another for its black ones; and the latter, though holding a valid British passport, have no automatic right to enter the country. This would have been unbelievable had it not been a reality.

**Christianity and British Imperialism**

According to one student of the British empire, 'Britain of all European countries in the nineteenth century made most profession of Christianity, partly because it had the biggest empire'. (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 62). 'One badge of superiority of Europeans in the Far East was their religion. Britons felt themselves to be peculiarly the pioneers of Christianity as well as of trade.' (*Ibid.*, p. 157). And he continues, 'In general Christianity was closely woven into the fabric of European ascendancy. It was the creed of the white man, of the conqueror, and doctrines of Election led easily towards a philosophy of chosen nations or a chosen race, a Herrenvolk. It might be bestowed on men of other colours, and it was indeed part of Europe's beatific vision of itself that it was the bearer of the true faith to the heathen; but all bishops and nearly all priests would continue to be white, as officers in colonial armies were'. (*Ibid.*, p. 318).

From the sixteenth century onwards 'all Roman Catholic authori-

ties were agreed that idolatry was an abomination, that the public practice of it in the dominions of a Christian king would call down the wrath of God upon the whole land, and that therefore it must be suppressed, if necessary by force. Hindu temples were destroyed and their property and revenues handed over to the Church'. (Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, 1966, p. 72).

A well-known authority on Victorian England has brought out the close connection between Evangelicalism and British imperialism. 'The Evangelicals gave to the island [Britain] a creed which was at once the basis of its morality and the justification of its wealth and power, and, with the creed, that sense of being an Elect People which, set to a more blatant tune, became a principal element in Late Victorian Imperialism'. (G. M. Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age*, New York, 2nd. ed. 1953, p. 11).

When David Livingstone came back to England from his exploration in Congo, he sought support for missionary work from the Manchester textile interests with the argument that Christianization of the Africans would create a demand for clothing and thus open up a large new market for Lancashire cotton. Thus was Christianity put at the service of trade. (See Deffontaines, *Geographie et religions*, Paris, 1948, p. 255).

There was at least one large colony in the British empire which was retained for the sake of Christianity alone: Uganda. Lugard strongly argued in favour of taking it over and against giving it up. He said that if the British withdrew, slave trade would revive and Islam or paganism would triumph over Christianity. It was on these lines that the question was debated in London, with Lugard and his imperialist allies with the Church Missionary Society and its missionary friends on one side and the rest on the other. Finally the Government declared for retention.

It is interesting to find that there were some persons who regarded Christianity too high a religion for the African 'primitive'; Islam, an inferior creed, suited him better. In 1840 John Stuart Mill, in a letter to the Positivist thinker Gustave d'Eichthal, wrote, 'Islamism [*sic.*] is a fortunate thing for the Africans'. (Francis E. Mineka, ed., *The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill 1812-1848*, Toronto, 1963, Vol. II, p. 456). In 1886 Joseph Thomson, an explorer, declared that Christianity was unsuited to the African's 'low undeveloped mind', while Islam, an inferior religion, fitted him better. (Joseph Thomson, "Note on the African Tribes of the British Empire", *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Britain and Ireland*, Vol. XVI, 1886; see also his "The Results of

European Intercourse with the Africans", *Contemporary Review*, March 1890, pp. 348 352).

So intent were the upholders of imperialism on seeking help from any quarter that some of them did not even balk at harnessing race to the imperial chariot. No distinction was made between Christianity, trade, race, civilization and other attributes of western superiority as long as they helped to push forward the wheel of empire. During the Boer War a snatch of poetry gained popularity in Britain which provides an insight, however comic, into the British imperial mind:

O Lord, Thou knowest our anguish sore
  When blacks are butchered by the Boer!
'Tis our prerogative of yore
  To slaughter niggers;
Only to make them love Thee more
  We pull our triggers.

(Quoted 'from a weekly paper' by Michael Davitt in the House of Commons on 20 October 1899; H. C. 4S. Vol. 77, col. 440).

Of course the South Africa of today is the truest British legacy of the racial Christianity of imperial days. The *Economist* of London reported on 5 September 1970 that as Christians the white Afrikaners 'are committed to the idea of the brotherhood of man, and as Calvinists they are even inheritors of the egalitarian and revolutionary traditions of the Reformation', but the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa 'not only condones apartheid, it practises it. Energetic mission work over the years has brought many non white converts, but these are not permitted to pray in the white man's church. The DRC is neatly divided into separate white, African, Coloured and Asian branches—the latter euphemistically termed "daughter" churches—and the activities of all are co ordinated by a white-controlled general mission council'. (pp. 32-33).

Even during the imperial age Christians had, in many cases, given a most non-Christian exhibition of their morals. Protestants and Catholics developed fierce animosities on various islands of the South Seas; 'the religious strife that Europe was leaving behind was being re-enacted outside, like a good deal of Europe's past'. (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 258).

In China the Christian imperialists of Europe left a name for themselves which should shame every Briton and European. Rape of Chinese women accompanied all foreign attacks, and naturally the Chinese came

to believe that Christianity was a 'religion of debauchery' and that missionaries practised 'magical means of enslaving women'. (See F. Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China 1839-1861*, Los Angeles, 1961, p. 56).

## CHAPTER 4

**Liberalism and British Imperialism**

W. S. Blunt, a 'liberal anti-imperialist' in his own opinion, travelled in the East in the 1870s and came back convinced that England had 'a providential mission' to ameliorate the misery of these countries. (See V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 126).

In the 1880s some British Liberals even defended some of the most shameful and inexcusable incidents of British imperial history. On Chinese opium-smoking and the Chinese Opium War, one of them wrote, 'We believe that the evils of opium smoking have been greatly exaggerated, and that the Chinese have no genuine ground of complaint against us. Moreover, if the traffic [in opium] were abolished, we do not see how the deficiency in the Indian revenue could be made up'. (W. S. Shirley, "Common Sense Liberalism: A Paper read before the Amicable Society", 8 May 1882, quoted in Peter Teed and Michael Clark, eds., *Portraits and Documents: Later Nineteenth Century 1868-1919*, 1969, p. 118).

**Socialism and British Imperialism**

There is absolutely no evidence to support the Socialist claim of the 'anti-imperialist tradition of the Labour movement' which is advanced by John Strachey in his *The End of the Empire* (1959, pp. 215-216). On the contrary, there is unlimited testimony from socialist lips to prove that the British Left was as imperialist in theory and practice as the Centre and the Right.

Let us begin with the nineteenth century Fabians and work our way down to the present-day socialists. First, two highly-respected modern historians of imperialism may be quoted in support of our thesis.

The Fabians, says Bernard Porter, 'accepted the Empire; they accepted, moreover, that the Empire and its existence were good and necessary. Shaw's object in *Fabianism and the Empire* was not only to show that the Empire needed reforming . . . but to demonstrate that a reformed Empire was a desirable thing, and certainly better than no Empire at all.' (Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire*, 1968, pp. 115 116). Not only were the Fabians imperialists, as perhaps all Englishmen were, but they also became jingoists, which certainly only a few Englishmen ever became. 'However much its leaders protested that their imperialism was not that of the Tories, to everybody else, socialists and non-socialists alike, the Fabian Society in 1900 had gone jingo.' (*Ibid.*, p. 109).

In the judgment of Professor Max Beloff, 'the main body of the Fabians was closer to the liberal imperialists, believing with them in the superiority of British (and indeed of western European) civilization and regarding its rule over backward peoples, as a whole, beneficial. They approved of the extension of the principle of full self-government to the dominions [which were white]. . . but not to India which was not yet capable of using it properly [and was black]'. (Max Beloff, *op. cit.*, p. 138).

Now let us go to the original and survey some Fabian pronouncements. In 1898 Hubert Bland, a prominent Fabian, made a strong case for colonial expansion by England 'on the grounds that if she did not make use of her opportunities in this direction other countries would oust her; and that England was the only country fit to pioneer the blessings of civilization'. (Reported in *Labour Leader*, 10 December 1898, p. 407).

The best witness is George Bernard Shaw, the dramatist and a leading Fabian. In an address on "Imperialism" delivered on 23 February 1900, he declared, 'For good or evil, it is we who have made England Imperialist . . . a Fabian is necessarily an Imperialist in theory'. (*Fabian News*, March 1900, pp. 2-3; also reported in *Daily Chronicle* of 4 March 1900). In the same year Shaw edited *Fabianism and the Empire*, in which the Fabians advocated compulsory military training to keep the empire secure. This was at a time when both Liberal and Conservative parties were opposing all forms of compulsory military training. (See G. B. Shaw, ed., *Fabianism and the Empire: A Manifesto by the Fabian Society*, 1900, pp. 39-41). This manifesto was such an imperialist and pro-Boer War document that it brought the Fabians very close to such diehard imperialists as Lord Rosebery. (See, for this confession, Beatrice Webb, *Our Partnership*, ed. by Barbara Drake and Margaret Cole, 1948, p. 198). In September 1901 Sydney Webb wrote that he was betting on Rosebery to inspire a 'virile', collectivist and imperialist opposition party. (See

S. Webb, "Lord Rosebery's Escape from Houndsditch", *Nineteenth Century*, September 1901, pp. 366-368; this article was reprinted two months later as Fabian Tract no. 108).

The socialists who succeeded the Fabians continued to follow the same policy. 'Many Labour's working class supporters were concerned about India's role as a market for British goods and were generally somewhat imperialist in their thinking.' (Max Beloff, *op. cit.*, p. 313). In 1955 the Conservative Commonwealth Council acknowledged that it had more in common with the Fabian Colonial Bureau and the official Labour Party doctrine on the colonies than with the militant anti-colonialism of Fenner Brockway and the party's left wing. (See *Colonial Rule*, Conservative Commonwealth Council, Commonwealth Series no. 2, London, 1955, pp. 26-27). In the words of a modern historian, 'some Labour members had just as strong a belief in the "guiding hand of imperialism", and as great a horror of "premature independence" as Conservative members [of Parliament]'. (J. M. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 196).

Now for some Socialist declarations as evidence. One Labour member of parliament, Joseph Havelock Wilson, a prominent trade unionist and founder of the National Amalgamated Sailors' and Firemen's Unions in 1887, voted consistently with the government on the Boer War. On 6 February 1900, he declared, 'I do believe in upholding the integrity of the British Empire. I am a British patriot above all things'. (H.C. 4S. Vol. 78, cols. 798-800). 'On none of the "burning issues" of empire . . . the Ashanti and Sudan expeditions, Uganda, even the Jameson Raid—did any Labour M. P. say a word in Parliament between 1895 and October 1899 . . . . Only once was Africa even mentioned at the Trade Union Congress . . . and the annual conference of the Independent Labour Party . . . made virtually no effort to discuss the colonies.' (Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire*, 1968, pp. 96-97).

One Socialist thinker of this time underlined the economic importance of the empire. 'No thoughtful socialist, so far as I am aware, would object to cultivate Uganda at the expense of its present occupiers if Lancashire were starving. Only he would have done this directly and consciously, and not by way of missionaries and exploiting companies'. (Karl Pearson, "Socialism and Natural Selection" in *The Chances of Death and Other Studies in Evolution*, 1897, p. 111).

In November 1898 John Burns, a Labour M. P., made a speech in Battersea on the Fashoda incident, which was not only imperialist in content but quite jingoist in tone. (See *The Times*, 14 November 1898). Soon after the Jameson Raid he spoke again calling on the government to send 1,500 troops to the Transvaal to 'clear things up'; this was in

January 1896. (See comment on it by the *Labour Leader* of 11 January 1896, which called it 'foolish talk', p. 12).

In October 1899, Robert Blatchford, the editor of the Labour monthly *Clarion*, came out in favour of the Boer War. 'My whole heart is with the British troops. Until the War is over I am with the Government', he said. (*Clarion*, 21 October 1899, p. 332). And next week, 'I believe that the real cause of the present war is the ignorance and the bumptiousness of the Boers . . . these uncultivated bullies'. (*Clarion*, 28 October 1899, p. 337).

On Egypt the Labour M.P.s said very little. Grayson spoke in the Egyptian debate of 30 July 1907 and Gill on 23 April 1913, but neither advocated independence.

Sydney Olivier, another Labour M.P. and later Secretary of State for India, was of the opinion that no race had a sacred right to exclude strangers from its territory. (See his *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, 1906, chapter 13). And in Ramsay MacDonald's opinion, Europe had a right to demand an exchange of goods from the tropics; 'the world is the inheritance of all men', he said. (R. MacDonald, *Labour and the Empire*, 1907, p. 98). This was nothing but a licence for colonial expansion and economic exploitation. A tacit approval was given to these ideas by all those Labour M.P.s who connived at the imperial cotton-growing schemes of the 1900s.

We may do well to look at some more pronouncements of Ramsay MacDonald because he was an important Labour theorist and was later to be a prime minister of Britain. In 1898 he had written that 'we have gone so far in our imperial history that we can hardly look back'; the British could not abandon India so long as she could not defend herself, but they could encourage 'a native Indian civilization' and reform the Indian government. (In the *Ethical World*, 12 November 1898). In 1901 he defended imperialism in these words, 'So far as the underlying spirit of Imperialism is a frank acceptance of national duty exercised beyond the nation's political frontiers, so far as it is a claim that a righteous nation is by its nature restless to embark upon crusades of righteousness wherever the world appeals for help, the spirit of Imperialism cannot be condemned.' (His "The Propaganda of Civilization", *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. XI, 1901, p. 456).

As late as in 1943 the Labour Party declared that 'for a considerable time to come' the African colonies would 'not be ready for self-government'. (Labour Party, *The Colonies: The Labour Party's Post-War Policy for the African and Pacific Colonies*, March 1943, p. 2).

In 1944 C. R. Attlee gave his party's support to Zionism on grounds

which were palpably imperialist. 'There is surely neither hope nor meaning in a "Jewish National Home" unless we are prepared to let Jews, if they wish, enter this tiny land [Palestine] in such numbers as to become a majority. There was a strong case for this before the war. There is an inevitable case now, after the unspeakable atrocities of the cold and calculated German Nazi plan to kill all the Jews in Europe. Here, too, in Palestine surely is a case, on human grounds, and to promote a stable settlement, for transfer of population. Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out as the Jews move in'. (Attlee's speech, while moving a resolution at the Labour Party Annual Conference of December 1944, on behalf of the National Executive of the party, quoted in C. Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, 1965, p. 311).

The *New Statesman*, a socialist weekly which has looked upon itself as the intellectual and moral vanguard of British socialist thinking, wrote this on Milner's imperial ideas in 1913, 'In his desire for the integrity of the Empire, Lord Milner, like the socialists, is really concerned about the breeding of "an imperial race" and necessarily finds himself demanding legislation essentially Socialist in character.' (1 May 1913, pp. 167-168).

**British Communists and British Imperialism**

The Communist Party of Great Britain has no better record to show on imperialism.

In the second half of 1924 it 'set up a Colonial Department to exercise leadership of the Communist movement in India as well as in other British colonies'. (*Communist Papers*, HMSO, London, 1926, Cmd. 2682, p. 96, cited in David N. Druhe, *Soviet Russia and Indian Communism*, New York, 1959, p. 69). It was the Communist Party of Britain which was the dominant agent for Moscow in the establishment of a growing communist movement in India between 1924 and 1928. (*Ibid.*, p. 89). Between 1939 and 1941 the Indian communists were, as before, 'under the direct tutelage of the British Communist Party'. (*Ibid.*, p. 207). In 1941 the British party issued orders to the Communist Party of India, and Harry Pollitt's letter containing these instructions reached even those leaders of the Indian party who were then in jail—a letter which the British authorities deliberately permitted to be received by the Indian communists then incarcerated in Deoli prison. (See *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211, and Mohan Das, *Communist Activity in India 1925-1950*, The Democratic Research Service, Bombay, 1951, pp. 7-8).

In the words of Professor Beloff, 'even the British communist party was conscious that the idea of a total dissolution of the Empire was not

something upon which they could rely for support'. (Max Beloff, *op. cit.*, p. 313).

What is very interesting here is the peculiar kind of imperialism of the British communist party by which it dictated to the Indian communist party not only the party-line but also the party tactics. This is a good example of imperialism within imperialism.

# CHAPTER 5

**Anglo-Indian Poetry**

The muse of poetry found no encouragement, not only among the British and Anglo-Indians but also among the Indians using the English language. While India has produced several prose-writers of the best quality, 'the only really good Indian poet in that language in recent years has been Dom Moraes, whose background is very untypically Indian'. (George Woodcock, reviewing *Two Cheers for the Commonwealth* by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, in *Pacific Affairs*, Winter 1970-71, p. 621).

If the writing of poetry is the ultimate proof of mastery over a language, as I think it is, then we must infer that the Indians never really knew the English language – by no means a surprising conclusion in the light of the background and nature of English which were so utterly alien to the Indian.

**Conan Doyle and Racial Imperialism**

'In Conan Doyle's novel of 1913, the *Poison Belt*, a table of ranks among the races, an order of fitness to survive, is implied in the sequence in which they succumb to the mysterious etheric poison that the planet has swum into. Africa and the Australian aborigines are speedily extinguished, followed by India and Persia, while in Europe the Slavs collapse sooner than the Teutons, and southern France sooner than the north.' (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-316). It is not difficult to see in this table the Hitlerian concept of the purity and superiority of the northern European Aryan race.

**John Buchan as a Novelist of Imperialism**

'Buchan had a deep and genuine belief in the moral rightness of the British cause. . . . Hannay's opponents serve Germany, but they also serve the devil: the cause of evil, disintegration and corruption; Hannay fights for England, and also for order, good government and moral decency.' (Geoffrey Grigson, ed., *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Modern World Literature*, 1963, pp. 80-81).

# CHAPTER 6

**India: The Centre of the British Empire**

The Government of India was almost an empire in its own right. It made its own policy, including foreign policy. It extended the Indian area of defence into the Middle East. It controlled Aden and the Arab principalities on the coast of Arabia. It handled its own relations with the Ottoman province of lower Mesopotamia, where it had its own resident (an Indian title), not a consul (a European title). It dealt with Afghanistan as it chose, at least for most of the time. In Persia it reached an agreement with the British Government in London in 1860 whereby all British consular and diplomatic posts in the south and east of Persia were staffed from India, while London handled Tehran and the remaining consulates. It entered into treaties, though only one-sided, with China on the issue of Tibet's autonomy.

'In the first decade of this century, approximately half the British army was stationed in India, and in addition the Indian army, in which all but the most junior officers were British, numbered nearly a quarter of a million men, with an almost inexhaustible reserve of manpower at its back. Long before India made its great contribution to British victory in the two world wars, this huge, pivotable force could be used, and had been used, as far east as China and as far west as Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia, to uphold British influence and trade; its importance was paramount to the last.' (Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1956*, 1963, pp. 11-12).

The British occupied Egypt for the sake of safeguarding the route to India. It was for the sake of the occupation of Egypt that they fought wars in South Africa and the Sudan and bargained away rich territories

in West Africa and prized the poor ones in north-east Africa beyond their value. They wanted to keep open both the long and short routes to India. (This is well brought out in R. Robinson, J. Callagher and Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, 1961, esp. pp. 289 ff.).

The British empire in Asia 'might have been called more accurately an Indo-British Empire. It was based on India; its extension over the countries clustered round the Indian Ocean was, by joint effort, British and Indian'. (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, 1947, p. 13). The British 'insinuated themselves in South Asia, raised Asiatic armies, financed them out of Asiatic revenues, and conquered as an Asiatic State'. (*Ibid.*, p. 18). 'It used Indian troops, it played Indian politics, it was thought of by Indian governments as one of the 'country powers'; it made its way partly through Indian allies.' (*Ibid.*, p. 19).

During the Crimean War, Lord Palmerston admitted in Parliament that 'England's real incentive to fight was in order to safeguard her route to India'. (See John Haslip, *The Sultan: The Life of Abdul Hamid*, 1958, p. 28). On 19 December 1904 Balfour, in a note, acknowledged the place India then occupied in 'the ruling conception of British strategy'. According to him, the British empire needed 209,000 soldiers; of these, a mere 27,000 were allotted to home defence, 30,000 for colonial garrisons; and 152,000 for drafts and reinforcements to India. (Cited in David Dilke, *Curzon in India, Vol. II: Frustration*, 1970, pp. 126-127).

In the report that inaugurated the British Committee of Imperial Defence in 1904, there is a sentence which runs: 'The British Empire is pre-eminently a great Naval, Indian and Colonial power.' (First Report of the Committee of Imperial Defence, quoted in Lord Hankey, *The Supreme Command 1914-1918*, 1961, Vol. I, p. 46). The order of precedence in this sentence is significant and correct.

In 1917 the British Government was contemplating a retention of a part of Iraq for Indian emigration. Lord Harcourt, a member of the Asquith Cabinet, submitted a memorandum to the cabinet in March 1917, in which he wrote, 'I assume that we shall retain some part of Mesopotamia, possibly as far from the Persian Gulf to Baghdad, mainly on the grounds . . . that this fertile land would give an outlet for Indian emigration'. (PRO Cab. 37/126, March 1917, quoted in Jon Kimche, *The Second Arab Awakening*, 1970, p. 49).

Here is a military assessment of India's central and all-important role in British imperial defence and power. Lord Alanbrook, till 1946 Chief of the Imperial General Staff, wrote, 'With the loss of India and

Burma the keystone of the arch of our Commonwealth Defence was lost. Without the central strategic reserve of Indian troops able to operate either east or west, we were left impotent.' (Alanbrook, "Notes on my Life", quoted in Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, 1959, p. 533).

**Recruitment of Indian Civil Servants in the Nineteenth Century**

Some readers may be interested in the syllabus of the examination for recruitment of civil servants for India in England before the beginning of proper competitive tests. 'Each candidate shall be examined in the four gospels of the Greek Testament and shall not be deemed duly qualified for admission to Haileybury College, unless he be found to possess a competent knowledge thereof; nor unless he be able to render into English some portion of the works of the following Greek authors: Homer, Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, Sophocles, and Euripides; nor unless he can render into English some portion of the works of one of the following Latin authors: Livy, Tarence, Cicero, Tacitus, Virgil, and Horace; and this part of the examination will include questions in ancient history, geography, and philosophy.

'Each candidate shall also be examined in modern history and geography, and in the elements of mathematical science, including the common rules of arithmetic, vulgar and decimal fractions, and the first four books of Euclid. He shall also be examined in moral philosophy, and in the evidence of the Christian religion as set forth in the works of Paley.' (J. H. Stocqueler, *Handbook to India*, 1844, quoted in Michael Edwardes, *Bound to Exile*, 1969, p. 2).

**Indian Civil Servants and Indian Languages**

'Few really bothered to learn the language of the people they ruled with any fluency, and they were thus heavily dependent on their native clerks.' (*Ibid.*, p. 14).

During the rule of the East India Company, too, the servants of the Company rarely succeeded in crossing the linguistic barrier. When a newly recruited administrator arrived in India he was given one year 'to master one of the languages principally required in the transaction of public business.' In England the Company's servants were trained at the Haileybury College where there was considerable emphasis on oriental languages, but too much stress was placed on Sanskrit which was described by one contemporary as 'a language no more useful to an

Indian magistrate than a knowledge of the tongue of the ancient Germans would be to a modern commissioner of police, who might now and then discover a slang term to be of orthodox Saxon origin, to the great edification of philologists; yet it may be doubted whether his efficiency would be much increased thereby'. (See J. H. Stocqueler, *Handbook to India*, 1844).

In the 1830s Col. Sleeman wrote that 'I have heard some of our highest diplomatic characters talking, without the slightest feeling of shame or embarrassment to native princes on the most ordinary subjects in a language which no human being but themselves could understand'. (W. H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, ed. by V. Smith, 1898, quoted in M. Edwardes, *op. cit.*, p. 14).

**Indian Civil Servants and Shop Talk**

'They sit and conjugate the verb "to collect": "I am a collector—He was a collector—We shall be collectors—You ought to be a collector—They would have been collectors".' (Letter of a magistrate's wife in J. C. Maitland, *Letters from Madras by a Lady*, 1843).

**Eccentric Colonial Civil Servants**

In addition to the examples given in the text, I may mention here two more, one from India and one from Nigeria.

Thomas Snodgrass was Collector at Ganjam in Madras between 1790 and 1800. Suspected of corruption he was ordered to submit his accounts to the Court of the East India Company. He set out from Rhamba, where he was then living, but alleged on his arrival that all his books and statements were lost when his boat capsized in Lake Chilka. As the lake was nowhere more than six feet deep, he was dismissed by the Company. In London the still rich ex-collector of Ganjam set himself up as a crossing sweeper in front of the East India House. The Court of the Company was shamed into restoring his pension.

'Rusty' Buckle, a district officer in Nigeria, refused promotion, preferring to be the Lord of his remote and small domain. When he received a telegram reading 'H. E. is so pleased with your report', he is said to have wired back 'Glad H. E. pleased'. To a further telegram 'For pleased read displeased', he replied 'For glad read sorry'. He dealt with another governor's rebuke on a steamer trip by diving overboard, and delaying his reappearance long enough to reduce His Excellency to tears of remorse.

# CHAPTER 7

**British Ignorance of the East**

In the nineteenth century Lord Shaftesbury proposed 'that an Indian should be appointed an official astronomer in order that by contemplating the stars his mind should be turned towards the true God'. This 'might surely be regarded as a supreme example in history of teaching one's grandmother to suck eggs'. (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, 1947, p. 53).

A recent British historian of Islam and the Arab world has pointed out another serious European misunderstanding of Eastern history. 'Europeans are often pleased to think of the Roman Empire as an essentially Western power, based on Italy, France, Britain and Spain, but history does not support their claim. Before the rise of Rome, all the great civilizations of the world had originated from Asia. This pre-eminence, acquired during a period of several thousand years, could not easily be reversed. When, therefore, the empire broke in half the Eastern or Byzantine Empire included most of the richest and the most civilized provinces.' (John Bagot Glubb, *Syria, Lebanon, Jordan*, 1967, pp. 55-56). 'The admiration felt in Europe for the ancient Romans has largely distorted our view of history. The successors of Rome, whether Byzantine Christians or Muslim Arabs, have received scant justice from European historians.' (*Ibid.*, p. 63).

The British public, said Guy Wint, has 'a limitless capacity for becoming bored about the Orient. How little has English culture itself been affected by Britain's eastern adventure. This may be a ground of complaint by the eastern peoples, who will say that no true friendship is possible in which there is not a two-way traffic'. (Guy Wint, *op. cit.*,

p. 215).

In general, the British public showed no interest in the empire or the colonies. 'The colonies were never a subject of widespread popular concern, except on the rare occasions when British newspapers took up a cause or developed an interest in a crisis.' (J. M Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 241). The Social Survey reported in as late as 1948 that only 25 per cent of its national sample knew the difference between a dominion and a colony. (See The Social Survey, *Public Opinion on Colonial Affairs*, new series no. 119, June 1948, pp. 17-23).

Most of the books published in Britian on imperial history and on the empire in the last twenty years carry the marks of such ignorance. To take only one example, V. G. Kiernan's *The Lords of Human Kind* (1969) is devoted to showing European and particularly British ignorance, indifference and arrogance about the East, but he himself uses the word 'Mogul' to describe the Mughuls throughout the volume.

Perhaps the British never grew out of the vastly amusing ignorance enshrined in the story of an old lady who, on seeing a kangaroo for the first time, was informed that it was a native of Australia, and at once replied, 'Then God help my poor sister; she's married one of them things'. (Told in W. S. Percy, *The Empire Comes Home*, 1937, p. 13).

**British Obsession with Parliamentary System of Government**

The unofficial Commonwealth Conference held at Lahore in 1954 defined commonwealth membership in terms of 'a firmly established parliamentary system of government' (Nicholas Mansergh, *The Multi-Racial Commonwealth*, 1955, p. 124); which was not only factually incorrect but, if accepted as a criterion of membership, would lead to the withdrawal of a majority of commonwealth countries from the organization.

**British Refusal to Settle in India**

An interesting advantage of British refusal to settle in India was once mentioned by Sir Halford Mackinder. 'The separation of the tropical Empire from the European island, although perhaps a source of weakness from a military point of view, has had this supreme advantage, that on the one hand imperial rule in the dependencies has not corrupted freedom at home, and on the other hand those who exercise that rule, go out generation after generation with the spirit of justice and trusteeship ever renewed from their free homes and schools.' (H. Mackinder, *The World War and After*, 1924, p. 266).

**British Changing Attitudes towards India**

If one looks closely at how the British viewed India in the context of their national interests, one can see a marked difference between the nineteenth century and twentieth century views. While in the nineteenth century British statesmen like Macaulay had believed that one day India was bound to be free and that such a day would be the proudest in English history, by the beginning of the twentieth century time and circumstance had changed England's fortunes and thus the old vision. Now the ideal was an efficiently administered India as an integral part of the British empire; because Britain needed India for the defence of her imperial interests and requirements and for strengthening her position in a world where new and powerful forces were beginning to threaten her superiority. That is why at the 1902 Indian durbar the viceroy, Lord Curzon, had the hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers' cut out of the Order of Service because it contained the lines:

Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane.

(This point is well brought out by Mary Burke, "From Empire to Commonwealth", in Kenneth Bradley, ed., *The Living Commonwealth*, 1961, p. 88).

**British Rule a Natural Force for Good**

British expansion in India is a force that 'operated by causes which we have not the power to control. It is in fact the natural progressive growth of civilization'—Sir John Malcolm. 'I can declare my conscientious conviction that no greater blessing can be conferred on the native inhabitants of India than the extension of British authority'—Lord Wellesley. (Both quoted in P. E. Roberts, *India under Wellesley*, 1929, pp. 109, 136).

**No History of India before Muslim Rule**

'. . . there is no book at present in possession of Hindus—the Mahabharata and Ramayana not excepted—of higher antiquity than the entrance of the Musalmans into India—say about 800 years from the present period'. [Tyler (initials not given), in a letter of 8 May 1823, quoted in Sisir Kumar Das, "Bengal Response to Christianity 1800-1850", in Bisheshwar Prasad, ed., *Ideas in History*, Bombay, 1968, pp. 76 77].

**The British Awed by Mughul Splendour**

Although the British rulers of India and their masters in Britain expressed much contempt for the Muslim, it is a historically ascertain-

able fact that early British administrators of India were greatly impressed with the Mughul age and were, at times, in awe of its resplendent culture and rich civilization. Three pieces of evidence may be cited here in support of this.

'The Mogul was far richer than any European sovereign of those times. Before the industrial revolution there was little difference between Europe and Asia in the means of production .... To the early generation of Europeans in India the Mogul power seemed one of the unshakable realities in the firmament. To attempt to overthrow it would be ludicrous ; there was no likelihood of its demise in any near future.' (Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, 1966, p. 78).

'For the first fifty years of the British Raj . . . British officers remembered how solid and awe-inspiring had seemed the Moghul Empire which they had succeeded, and to what extent their own coming to supremacy had been due to juggling, chicanery and to luck. Therefore they regarded their position as precarious and their Empire as probably a very temporary one.' (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, 1947, p. 52).

'A hundred years after they had dwindled to phantoms in the Red Fort at Delhi, a young lady in Scotland would write in her diary that a laird who was giving a ball and making a splash meant "to act the Great Mogul".' V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 32, citing J. Irvine, ed., *Parties and Pleasures: The Diaries of Helen Graham 1823-1826*, Edinburgh, 1957, p. 212).

# CHAPTER 8

## Britain and Islam

A whole fat tome can be written on British ignorance of and prejudice against Islam. A few notes are given here merely as pointers.

In medieval English 'mawmetrie' or 'Mahomedanism' was an equivalent of idolatry. (See H. Bruce, *English History in Contemporary Poetry*, no. 1, 1914, pp. 33-36).

In the eighteenth century the phrase 'Turkish beauties' was used in England to mean a woman's buttocks. (P. Fryer, *Mrs. Grundy: Studies in English Prudery*, 1965 ed., p. 273).

In the nineteenth century Turkey, as the only powerful Muslim country in the world, was subjected to limitless contempt and hatred in Britain. In 1791 Burke had asked himself about the Turks, 'What had these worse than savages to do with the Powers of Europe?' Cn 31 March 1854, in a speech in the House of Commons, John Bright recalled Burke's remark and then denounced as bad even for the Turks themselves 'the miserable and lunatic idea, that we are about to set the worn-out Turkish Empire on its legs'. Gladstone, the prime minister, was the greatest enemy of the Turks in the country and let no opportunity go of attacking them in the severest terms. The result of this universal condemnation was that for the British the two words 'Turkish misrule' came to be yoked together as often as 'feudal anarchy' or 'British greatness'.

Kiernan tells us that Europe (by which he really means Britain) treated the Sudanese Mahdism as 'purely diabolical, one more witches' brew of African primitiveness and Muslim fanaticism'. (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 216).

One of the main points made against the Muslims was that they indulged in polygamy, with the implication that having sexual liaison with more than one woman was immoral in itself and a degradation for the women. To this we have an English answer. 'In practice, while the ordinary man in the East could only afford one wife, the man of means in the West indulged himself with a plurality of women. He divided his life as it were into an Occident and an Orient, the latter being the sphere of the illicit, the fleshly, the old Adam, where Old Testament patriarchs and Turkish pashas disported themselves side by side.' (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 135). And again, 'In its treatment of its own working-class women, to say nothing of those employed in the mills it built in Asia, the West had not much to boast of . . .'. (*Ibid.*, p. 137).

But the best answer to British hypocricy about polygamy was that given by a Turkish pasha to Lord Palmerston's priggish remark that nothing could go right in Turkey until polygamy was abolished. 'Ah ! Milord', said the pasha, 'nous ferons commes vous, nous presenterons l'une et nous cacherons les autres.' (Ah! My Lord, in that case we will behave like the British, presenting to the world one of our women and hiding the others for our private pleasure.) (Quoted in M. E. Grant, Duff, *Notes from a Diary 1851-1872*, 1911, p. 206; my translation is not literal but gives the sense).

In a recent publication a former bishop in south India and currently a professor in Hamburg university calls Haider Ali 'the tyrant of Mysore'. (Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, 1966, p. 79).

Even Kiernan himself, who sets out to describe other people's prejudices and biases, cannot help blackening the name of Islam. At one place, he compares Akbar's 'open-minded eclectism' with Aurungzeb's 'narrow Islamic orthodoxy' (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 18); and at another place he makes the irresponsible and historically incorrect statement that 'the sea and the peoples of the sea had no place in the tradition they [Muslims] belonged to' (*ibid.*, p. 33), forgetting Arab seafaring and Ottoman naval successes.

The level of British knowledge of the East can be measured by the fact that many of those who had visited Iran and had been much impressed by Nadir Shah 'believed his earlier name, Tahmasp Quli Khan, to have been a corruption of Thomas O'Kelley, and this "second Alexander" an Irishman by birth'. (Sarah Searight, *The British in the Middle East*, 1969, p. 9 fn.).

The British also distorted and corrupted Muslim names in India in an absurd attempt to Anglicize them. Two instances: Siraj-ud-Daula—

Sir Roger Dowler; Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk='Cha, sugar and milk'.

British spelling of Indian proper names produced equally quaint and annoying results. Some examples with their variants:

Sind: Synde, Cinde, Sindu, Scinde, Cindy.

Bengal: Banzelo, Bemgala, Banghella; all these representing the Sanskrit *Vangalam*; from another form of which, *Vanga*, Muslim geographers took their 'Bang'.

Delhi: The correct Hindi is 'Dilli'; 'Dehli' is the Indo-Persian form; the English 'Delhi' is entirely wrong.

(See J. Courtenay Locke, ed., *The First Englishmen in India*, New York, 1970 rep , editor's notes to the text, pp. 172, 178, 180).

As for speaking a Muslim language (or, for that matter, any language but their own) the British stood very low indeed. It is an astonishing encounter to meet a civilian who has spent thirty-five years in India or a present-day professor of modern Indian history or of Islamic history at a British university and to find that he cannot speak a word of any Indian language, Arabic, Persian or Turkish. Usually he does not have any acquaintance with the language, bookish or otherwise.

But it is dumbfounding to know that R. A. Nicholson, the great Arab and Persian scholar and the translator of the immense work of Rumi, could not speak either Arabic or Persian. 'Never having heard Arabic spoken, his pronunciation of Arabic words was somewhat idiosyncratic .... [On one occasion] Nicholson was giving a course of lectures on Sufism, attended, I regret to say, by only two students—an Indian and myself. One session had been devoted to the spiritual "states" and "stages" of which the Sufi authors speak, and Nicholson had discoursed at some length on *tawakkul*, or "trust in God". After the lecture, my fellow-student asked me in much perplexity, "what was that Professor Nicholson was talking about tobacco? I didn't know that the ancient Sufis took tobacco".' (A. J. Arberry, *Oriental Essays: Portraits of Seven Scholars*, 1960, p. 224).

In the light of such bias against Islam and such ignorance of Indian languages it is not at all surprising to find a British priest complaining of Christian missionaries' failure to convert Indian Muslims. 'Conversion of Muslims was admittedly so arduous that there was no great eagerness to attempt it. As late as 1925 the Anglican commission pointed to the "startling" fact that of five thousand missionaries in India scarcely one hundred were making Muslims their quarry.' (*The Call from the Moslem World*, 1926, preface by Right Rev. S. Donaldson, p. 25).

In fairness it must be pointed out that this ignorance, prejudice and indifference to Islam and the East have been acknowledged

and regretted by a few British scholars and writers.

In the closing years of the nineteenth century Edward G. Browne, the Persian scholar, wrote, 'Often I reflect with bitterness that England, though more directly interested in the East than any other European country save Russia, not only offers less encouragement to her sons to engage in the study of Oriental languages than any other great European nation, but can find no employment even for those few who, notwithstanding every discouragement, are impelled by their own inclination to this study, and who, by diligence, zeal, and natural aptitude, attain proficiency therein.' (Quoted in A. J. Arberry, *op. cit.*, p. 165).

More recently Glubb Pasha has remarked, 'Unfortunately, as history has been taught in the West for five hundred years, we are told at school a little of the history of Greece and Rome and from there we jump to the history of modern Europe. The many intervening centuries during which Muslim nations led the world are never included in our curriculum. Our utter ignorance of the past history of these peoples has been largely responsible for our many mistakes in our relations with them.' (John Bagot Glubb, *op. cit.*, p. 8).

Yet, by and large, our indictment of Britain stands. The tradition set by Sir William Muir, who was 'grossly tendentious in the manner of a Christian missionary in the colonies' (C. A. Belyaev, *Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages*, trans. by Adolphe Gourevitch, 1969, p. 82) has been followed by nearly every British historian, scholar and writer on Islam.

In December 1944 the British government appointed a commission to study the state and future of oriental learning in Britain. The report of this Scarbrough commission, published in 1947, admitted that 'it is clear that before 1939 in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union and the United States of America, the number of teaching posts in Oriental studies was substantially larger than in our universities. Further, Great Britain has established no institution in any Eastern country which could compare with the institutes set up by certain other countries—for instance, the French Institute at Hanoi, the Netherlands Indian Institute at Batavia, and the American University at Beirut. In 1946, therefore, Great Britain continues to lag behind in the Oriental field'. (Scarbrough Report on Oriental learning, 1947, quoted in A. J. Arberry, *op. cit.*, p. 244).

Apparently oriental learning, and in particular the study of Islam, has not made much progress since 1947.

During the last 150 years the great bulk of Western scholarly work on Islam has been done outside Britain by non-British scholars. A list

of modern European scholars would run something like this: Jacques Berques, Regis Blachere, Robert Brunschvig, Claude Cahen, M. Canard, Louis Gardet, Henri Laoust, Dominique Sourdel, A. P. Caussin, Janine Sourdel-Thomine, E. Levi-Provencal, and, of course, L. Massignon (all French); L. Caetani, M. Guidi, C. A. Nallino, M. M. Moreno, L. Veccia Vaglieri, M. Amari, A. D'Ancona, G. Levi Della Vida, and Franceso Gabrieli (all Italian); F. Buhl (Denmark); T. Andrae (Sweden); and E. Saavedra, F. Codera and Dozy (Spain). To this must be added even a longer roll of German scholars who have added lustre to national letters and Islamic studies. In contrast we have only a few British names to mention: Nicholson, Browne, Gibb and Arberry; and of these only Gibb and Arberry wrote on Islam, the other two were literary historians and critics. (For the fact that most of the work on Muslim history has been done in Germany, France, Spain and Italy, and *not* in Britain or in the English language, see the account of thousands of books in this field given in Jean Sauvaget, *Introduction to the History of the Muslim East: A Bibliographical Guide*, based on the second edition as recast by Claude Cahen, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965; both the author and the editor are French, and the book was first published in French in Paris).

**Britain and Hinduism**

The Bengali Hindus were the first group of Indian Hindus that the British came to know well; the result was not flattering to the Hindus. In his 3-volume study, *A View of the History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindoos* (London, 1822), W. Ward could not find a single quality to praise among the Bengali Hindus. They lacked 'integrity, humanity, truth or generosity' (Vol. I, p. 287); '. . . gratitude itself appears to make no part of their virtues' (Vol. I, p. 289).

The truth of these findings is confirmed by a modern Hindu scholar himself. 'At the beginning of the nineteenth century the social and religious conditions of the Hindus of Bengal presented a very dismal picture. The whole country [*sic.*] was steeped in the most debasing forms of idolatry and superstition . . . . Revolting practices like the Sati and the throwing of children into the Ganges were looked upon as great acts of virtue' (V. A. Narain, "Indigenous Forces for Social Reforms in Bengal in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century", in B. Prasad, ed., *Ideas in History*, Bombay, 1968, p. 134; see also, for similar evidence, Shibnath Shastri, *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, Vol. I, pp. 1-2, cited in support in the above passage).

A few decades later G. O. Trevelyan found that a 'want of truth-

fulness leavens the whole being of the Bengalee . . . the mass of Bengalees have no notion of truth and falsehood'. (G. O. Trevelyan, *Competition Wallah*, 2nd ed., 1866, p. 221).

But the significant point is that in spite of such low opinion of the Hindus, several British administrators and observers of India looked kindly at them and believed that the British had done a good thing in liberating them from 'Muslim tyranny' (See V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 33). This sort of feeling continued to inspire the British outlook throughout British rule in India. The Hindus were, of course, delighted and grateful for such appreciation and sympathy. To take one example, when Ramsay MacDonald's *The Awakening of India* was published, an unnamed Hindu wrote to him on 25 June 1912, congratulating him on the book's 'sympathetic imagination', and saying, 'You have won my soul by so wonderfully catching the soul of India . . . . I cannot shake off my idea that you are a Hindoo reborn in western flesh.' (Quoted in Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire*, 1968, p. 314 fn.).

Many in Britain and in the British empire took all the Indians to be Hindus. Not only that, but in South Africa in the nineteeth century the Anglo-Indians on leave from India were called 'Hindus'. (*East India Army Magazine* for July 1853, quoted in Denys Forrest, *The Oriental: Life Story of a West End Club*, 1968, p. 75).

There is no doubt that modern Hinduism is a western discovery. It was during the period from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteeth century that several British scholars began to study Hinduism, discovered its ancient culture, and built up a rather idealistic picture of a great religion and civilization which had deteriorated under foreign Muslim rule. Men like Colebrook, Max Muller and Jones presented their discoveries to the Hindus, thus making possible the modern Hindu revivalism and its momentous consequence: Hindu (or Indian) nationalism. It must also be noted that all these discoverers of Hinduism were incorrigibly hostile to Islam: Max Muller being a good example of this.

The Christian missionaries in India also made a powerful contribution to this Hindu awakening. 'The seeds of *religious nationalism* were sown by the missionaries and they sprouted when *Tattvabodhini Patrika* started attacking the missionaries. It resisted Christianity in a determination to "protect our own religion in our own country", and declared in an article that, "a man's native land is so dear to his heart, that its very rivers, mountains, and plains demand his love and grant his pleasure". This new emotion, that is patriotism, was nourished by the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* and later shaped by Bankimcandra and Vivekananda.' (Siser Kumar Das, "Bengal's Response to Christianity 1800—

1850", in B. Prasad, *op. cit.*, p. 81; *Tattvabodhini Patrika* was a journal established in 1843, sponsored by Debendranath Tagore, and edited by Aksay Kumar Datta).

Not only religious and political, but even literary, awakening among the Hindus was due to British initiative. 'It will thus be observed that earliest literary activity began in Maharashtra, not out of any conscious effort on the part of the indigenous population, but out of sheer love of learning of some of the Early Englishmen. As a matter of fact, the first Marathi lexicon is by Dr. William Carey (1801), an English missionary of Serampore. He also prepared the first Marathi grammar.' (V. D. Rao, "Ideas Motivating Social Evolution in Maharashtra during the nineteenth century", in B. Prasad, *op. cit.*, p. 142).

It may be mentioned here in passing that early work on Urdu was done, not by any Englishman, but by the Frenchman Garcin de Tassy; which is another indication of British lack of sympathy for anything associated with Indian Islam.

The reader is referred to P. J. Marshall, ed., *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1970, which reprints seven of the most significant English contributions to the European understanding of Hindus in the late eighteenth century.

Finally, I may cite here a horrifying instance of British sympathy for the Hindus of a very recent date. As everyone knows the Government of the Indian Republic has been fighting a colonial war against the Nagas on the north-east. The Nagas are neither Indians nor Hindus, and they refuse to form a part of India. In August 1966 Professor J. H. Hutton, a former British deputy commissioner of the Naga Hills and later Professor of Social Anthropology at Cambridge (he died in 1968), wrote a letter in the *Statesman* of Calcutta offering ideas on how to end Naga resistance and ensure their forcible inclusion in India. 'I should offer', he wrote, 'besides a general amnesty, a thumping reward to anyone bringing in the heads of half-a-dozen specified (resistance) leaders.' India accepted the suggestion and, according to a report in the *Statesman* of September 1969, in the previous March eleven heads had been taken from Naga resistance fighters by head-hunters of the Yimchungra tribe. Rupees two hundred made up the reward for each head. (See Cyril Dunn's report on the *Sunday Observer* of London, 22 March 1970). No commentary is required on these proceedings, instigated by an Englishman and a Christian against a Christian, freedom-loving people. The British brought to India the rule of law, but also head-hunting.

**Public Schools and the Empire**

'Teaching was efficient and it was assumed, or so it seemed to me

that every boy could at one time or another be in some such position as viceroy of India, and must be brought up with this end in view.' (Anthony Powell, in Graham Greene, ed., *The Old School*, 1934, p. 152).

**Western View of the Indian**

'. . . ever since Columbus the term "Indian" had been current in the sense of what the nineteenth century called a "native", and had been applied to backward peoples, most of them easily subdued, all over Americas and the Pacific.' (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 34).

**British View of the Pathans**

'. . . it was beyond question that he [the Pathan] appealed strongly to and enlisted the sympathies of British officers who had dealings with him. Deep called to deep and there were some who said the call came through more clearly when the Briton was a Scott' (J. G. Elliot, *The Frontier 1839—1947: The Story of the North-West Frontier of India*, 1968, p. 75).

'But in no land, and among no people, is it possible, I think, to feel quite the lifting of the heart that is the experience of so many who have crossed the Indus at Attock to live among Pathans. In some strange way they are made to feel they have come home.' (Sir Olaf Caroe, in his Preface to *ibid.*, p. v.).

'No British woman in India would have made an Indian (except a religious saint) the hero of a book; only beyond the Khyber Pass was such a friendship possible.' [V. G. Kiernan, referring to Lillias Hamilton's novel *A Vizier's Daughter* (1900), in *op. cit.*, p. 122].

See also my *Britain and Muslim India*, 1963, p. 17.

**British Parliament and Colonial Debates**

It is generally believed, and rightly so, that the House of Commons emptied of its members when India was being debated. This showed lack of interest in the greatest single portion of the empire. What is even more indicative of British indifference to colonial affairs is that until 1950, when the Conservative opposition changed the day, the annual debate on the colonial estimates in the Committee of Supply of the House of Commons tended to coincide with the rival attraction of the Buckingham Palace Garden Party. (See H. C. 5S. Vol. 477, col. 1433).

**British Imperial Ambitions**

In the nineteenth century 'no one of influence ever anticipated giving up India, save in the very distant future, after its inhabitants had

been Christianised, liberalised, Westernised, and taught to speak good English'. (Michael Edwardes, *The West in Asia 1850-1914*, 1967, p. 167).

British ambitions to rule the whole of Africa were voiced in early twentieth century. Mathers wrote in 1907 that the 'destiny of the British people to open up Africa from south to north may safely be left to the hereditary capacities of the [British] race'. And Ewart Grogan declared that the white man would take all in Africa as he had in North America; 'it is pathetic, but it is history', he said. (Both quoted in Roy Lewis and Yvonne Foy, *The British in Africa*, 1971, p. 29).

Even in the mid-thirties of this century the British were obviously looking forward to a long imperial career. It was in 1936 that the headquarters of the Royal Empire Society in Northumberland Avenue, London, were built in the grand manner.

To these grandiose British plans of world domination the Americans, as members of the Anglo-Saxon race, gave zealous support. 'It is the Anglo-Saxon's manifest destiny to go forth as a world conqueror. He will take possession of the islands of the sea. . . . This is what fate holds for the chosen people.' (William Allen White, editor of the Emporia (Kansas) *Gazette*, writing in 1899, quoted by Tristram Coffin in a letter to the *Encounter*, February 1971, p. 90). 'God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No! He has made us master organisers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. . . . He has marked the American people as His chosen instrument to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America.' (Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana, speaking in 1900, quoted in *ibid.*).

# CHAPTER 9

**Low Quality of Indian Education under British Rule**

The Indian Education Commission, under the Chairmanship of Sir William Wilson Hunter, described Indian education in 1882 as 'a sterile exercise in obtaining useful knowledge rather than a real culture of the mind'.

**Impact of English Language on Indians**

It is generally said that the introduction of English in India helped to create nationalism. 'Yet nationalism would have developed in any event as the result of contact with the outside world. . . . The main importance, indeed, of the use of English by the educated class was different and was to detach them curiously from the psychic life of their own country. Since their thinking in matters of public affairs, modern commerce, and science was done in English, while their thinking on domestic matters was in the vernacular, the effect on the mind could not but be friction and instability.' (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, 1947, p. 62).

# CHAPTER 10

**British Aloofness from Indians**

Throughout British rule the rulers and the ruled never met socially, or in any other way. The British kept themselves away from all contact with the Indians. This was true as much of the eighteenth century as of the twentieth.

When asked what she had seen of the 'natives' during her long stay in India, one senior lady replied, 'Oh, nothing. Thank goodness, I know nothing at all about them, nor I don't wish to: really, I think the less one sees and knows of them the better'. (J. C. Maitland, *Letters from Madras by a Lady*, 1843, quoted in Michael Edwardes, *Bound to Exile*, 1969, p. 41).

'One of the shortcomings of the British administration in India', says Guy Wint, 'has been his [*sic.*] embarrassed aloofness from the Indian educated classes.' (Guy Wint, *op. cit.*, p. 69). Even he cannot understand the mind of his people regarding this attitude. 'But historians of the future will perhaps never cease to wonder why a people which accomplished so much for its dependencies, and was so liberal in many of its political constructions, so wantonly threw away the affection and regard which might have been its reward.' (*Ibid.*, p. 210).

This aloofness might have had less damaging consequences had it not, in time, developed into contempt and hatred. 'By the 1880s, officials and non-officials alike were united in their dislike of "educated" Indians. The dislike was soon to turn to hatred.' (Michael Edwardes, *Bound to Exile*, 1969, p. 193).

It must be remembered, however, that in this matter India was not being subjected to any discrimination. The British record shows consis-

tency in shunning and disliking the educated classes of all non-white races. The African intelligentsia met even harsher treatment at the hands of the British than did the Indian.

'For the British the educated African was a gaudy, despised imitator of European ways. For them the "real" African was the peasant or the traditional chief who, unlike the educated African, did not challenge their supremacy.' (Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, 1968, pp. 397-398).

Even the humanitarian Briton could not conceal his contempt for the black race. Sir Samuel White Baker, who was one of those who crushed the slave trade, once said, 'The treachery of the Negro is beyond belief; he has not a moral instinct and is below the brute. How is it possible to improve such abject animals?' (Quoted by Peter Quennell in his Foreword to Roy Lewis and Yvonne Foy, *The British in Africa*, 1971, p. xvii).

Another British comment, of 1879, runs, 'I have little sympathy, and no agreement, with those who, forgetting, apparently, that this red Kaffir is in truth a savage, would treat him as if he were already a Christian and civilized man. To treat him kindly, justly, considerately, lovingly; to try to do him every possible good, and chiefly, to bring his soul in contact with the Saviour, is our simple duty, but to *trust* him is no part of our duty. It is worse than folly because it defeats our philanthropic views and prolongs his debasement. Who could trust a thief, or a liar, or a murderer? The whole Kaffir nation, root and branch, is a huge thief, an inveterate liar, and a wholesale murderer.' (R. M. Ballantyne, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 28).

As in India British aloofness had deteriorated into contempt, in Africa it became 'superciliousness', and this became more and more obvious as the nineteenth century wore on. (See *ibid.*, p. 25).

If the British administrator or resident in Africa looked at the negro as unfit for social intercourse, there is some explanation for this, though hardly any excuse. But what shows the inherent racialism of the British people is the fact that even the explorers, who are or should be free from this feeling and from the habits of an imperial master, found nothing good in the Africans. Their accounts are 'almost consistently unfavourable' to the African. (See *ibid.*, p. 43).

The hatred for the educated African was 'a long-established prejudice among Englishmen on the West Coast' of Africa; later it spread to other areas of the continent. (Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire*, 1968, p. 322).

The British practised this aloofness even in relation to peoples whom

they did not in fact rule. Their behaviour in China was no different from what it was in India and Africa. Sir John Bowring, the British plenipotentiary in China, reported in 1858 that 'the separation of the native population from the European is nearly absolute; social intercourse between the races wholly unknown.' (Quoted in G. B. Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong*, Oxford, 1958, pp. 121-122). Many years later, a visiting journalist noticed among the British 'a distinct abhorrence for the Chinese. They speak of them as if they were beasts'. (See H. W. Lucy, *East by West*, 1885, Vol. II, p. 116).

Finally let us see how a present-day Englishman explains this British habit and what reasons he gives for a lack of it among the French. 'Englishmen more than others insulated themselves when abroad from both what was bad and what was good in their environment.... At home Englishmen preserved through all their national doings up and down the world an impregnable insularity. English literature reflected this in an indifference, nearly as complete as Mrs. Rapkin's, to everything beyond the British Channel and St. George's Channel, those natural frontiers of civilization.' (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 321).

In the eighteenth century 'Frenchmen could look at Asians as interesting foreigners, instead of looking down on them, because France owed no colonies worth mentioning in Asia until later nineteenth century. This was not unconnected with the fact that in Europe Frenchmen were the leading spirits in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. One feature of it was a willingness to recognise civilisations outside Europe as fellow-members of a human family, equal or even superior to Europe in some of their attainments. The *Philosophes* thought, or liked to think they did, as citizens of the world, bounded by no narrower frontiers than those of all humanity.' (*Ibid.*, p. 20).

**One Reason for British Superiority in India**

One interesting and quite important point is suggested by Kiernan. Long before old age and physical infirmity came to trouble the British resident in India, he left the country to retire and go home. Except the permanent residents, who were very small in number and did not really represent the imperial power, the Indians never saw an old. senile, feeble Englishman. Thay always saw him young, healthy, robust and active. This must have, howsoever subconsciously, influenced the Indian's general opinion and image of the British. (See *ibid.*, p. 55).

**Indian Imitation of British Ways**

The Indians of the towns and cities took pride in behaving like the

British; in some cases, as in dress, even at the cost of severe discomfort and inconvenience to their person. But they were not alone in this unwholesome but probably unavoidable operation. The Africans did the same. To quote a Kenyan, 'I know African friends of mine who when they speak Swahili they even speak it like the English civil servants or settlers used to speak it, with a sort of Oxford accent'. (Quoted in John Roberts. *A Land Full of People: Kenya Today*, 1967, p. 89).

**British and Indian Outlooks Different**

Although in most cases it is grossly misleading to speak of an 'Indian' character or an 'Indian' outlook, the following attempt by a British student to explain the failure of a meeting of British and Indian minds is worth a passing notice. ' . . . the defect of the modern western outlook is that all its many values are separate from one another. There is no longer a comprehensive pattern or picture of the nature of the world and of the nature of man as is found in other civilisations or existed earlier in Europe. Thus, in receiving the riches of the West, the Indian surrendered what had been the chief fortifying asset of his life, his former clear-cut picture of why the universe existed and what was his role in it'. (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, 1947, p. 69).

**British Self-Sacrifice in the Interest of the Empire**

In the body of the book I have made several references to the difficulties, discomforts and risks faced by the British administrators in their Asian and African possessions. Heat, dust, disease, unwholesome climate and other personal inconveniences were borne by them in the interest of imperial glory.

But in Africa even a greater danger—the ultimate of all risks—stared them in the eye. This was death. Nobody expected the British colonial rulers in several parts of Africa to live long. Hence the story of a newly-appointed Governor to the Niger who asked if his fare home would be paid on the expiry of his term of office and was told that the question had never arisen before.

One ex-governor told the Parliament that he believed that a living Governor of Sierra Leone was a rather rare species; and the journal *John Bull* jested that governors had to be sent out, like dispatches, in triplicate. Moreover, quite naturally, insurance companies refused them cover.

**The British Dilemma of Training the Colonies in Self-Government**

In a 300 page book, after considering this dilemma, a present-day

British scholar has only one answer to give: that the development of nationalism in the colonies was so unexpected and rapid that it frustrated all colonial plans and policies. (See J. M. Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, Oxford, 1967, esp. chapter 5 on "The Transfer of Power", pp. 195-240).

But this is worse than an answer. In fact, it attributes an inexcusable blindness to the makers of imperial policy. With the kind of schools and colleges being opened in the colonies and the courses taught in them, what else did the British expect to happen there if not a creation of the national spirit? National awakening was not only encouraged by the British; it was in fact a result of British contact and education. To say that, in spite of these developments, which were initiated by the British themselves, the colonial rulers were taken by surprise by the appearance of nationalism is a very special kind of pleading, and very bad pleading at that.

**British Self-Praise**

The British enjoy a reputation for being unemotional and undemonstrative in their feelings. This is generally true. But it is a sure indication of one trait in their character that they spared no words of their own and no feelings of others when it came to express contempt for the non-British peoples and admiration for the British empire. They never tired of looking down upon the East, even upon Europe itself, and of praising themselves for possessing all the virtues in the world.

When an average Englishman settles in the East, said Sir E. Satow, 'the mind's growth comes to a standstill'. (E. Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, 1921, p. 28). The British 'could tuck their respectable Christian beliefs, along with any doubts they might feel about them, into the back of their minds, and feel up-to-date and rational by spurning the absurdities of less progressive regions—Spain, Africa, Islam'. (V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 139).

A British diplomat in Japan is said to have pronounced the verdict that the Japanese 'are the greatest liars on earth'. (Townsend Harris, quoted in C. Crow, *Harris of Japan*, 1939, p. 174).

Anyone who reads Lord Macartney's journal of his Chinese stay will find that he was conscious of the British habit of regarding the rest of mankind with contempt, and he noticed that while other foreigners residing in Canton mixed socially with the Chinese, the British alone kept aloof. (See Lord Macartney, *An Embassy in China*, ed. by J. L. Cranmer-Byng, 1967, pp. 229-230).

Almost at the same time Captain Osborn wrote of the Chinese,

'force rather than argument, necessity rather than conviction, is the only rule by which the Chinaman can be made to agree with a European'. (S. Osborn, *The Past and Future of British Relations in China*, Edinburgh, 1860, p. 2). It was Britain's duty to break down 'the unrighteous walls of monopoly which bar out four hundred millions of men from European civilization and God's truth'. (*Ibid.*, p. 169). It is quite true that 'books dealing with China are almost without exception hostile'. (A. Ular, *A Russo-Chinese Empire*, Paris, 1902, Eng. ed., London, 1904, Preface).

With such an insultingly low view of the non-British, it is no wonder that the British missed no opportunity to praise themselves, their empire and their race. Let us review some expressions of this self-admiration, which at times assumed nauseating proportions and contents.

In 1879 Gladstone remarked, 'Why, gentlemen, there is not a country in the history of the world that has undertaken what we have undertaken'. (Quoted in "Introduction", C. J. Bartlett, ed., *Britain Pre-Eminent*, 1969, p. 4; note that Gladstone was a Whig, not a Tory imperialist like Disraeli).

In the mid-nineteenth century Burton, while serving in Sind in 1843-44, said of the British in India, 'There was not a subaltern in the 18th Regiment who did not consider himself capable of governing a million Hindus'. (Quoted in Isabell Burton, *Life of Captain Sir Richard Burton*, 1893, Vol. I, p. 101).

In its last address in 1858 before its rule in India was terminated the East India Company claimed for itself a unique distinction in the history of the world. 'The Company has the privilege of transferring to the service of Her Majesty such a body of civil and military officers as the world has never seen before.' (Quoted in Michael Edwardes, *The West in Asia 1850-1914*, 1967, p. 37).

A few years later Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, a law member of the viceroy's executive council from 1869 to 1872, 'hailed what Rudyard Kipling was later to call the "Queen's Peace" as comparable only with the universal peace announced at the time of Christ's nativity'. (*Ibid.*, pp. 170-171).

In 1879 the eighth Duke of Argyll, Queen Victoria's son-in-law, was so impressed with the parade organized in London to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Queen's succession to the throne, that he wrote to her, 'we could not help remembering that no sovereign since the fall of Rome could muster subjects from so many and such distant countries all over the world'. (G. E. Buckle, ed., *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, 1930, Series 3, Vol. III, p. 181).

Two comments by Englishmen themselves sum up the British attitude of the nineteenth century. 'Whatever a white man did must in some grotesque fashion be "civilised". An opium smuggler, who could not help feeling shocked when he saw the "shrivelled and shrunken carcasses" produced by the drug, landed on one occasion on Formosa with his men, had a fight, burned a village, plundered a junk, and removed its ammunition because "there was no knowing how much they might yet require, before the natives were brought into submission to our superior civilization".' (Quoting L. Anderson, *A Cruise in an Opium Clipper*, 1891, chapter 33, V. G. Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 24).

'For a century the Englishman has behaved in India as a demigod .... Any weakening of this confidence in the minds of the English or of the Indians would be dangerous.' (C. W. Dilke and S. Wilkinson, *Imperial Defence*, 1892, rev. ed. 1897, p. 80).

This obsession with self-greatness did not abate with the coming of the twentieth century. Curzon set the tune for the coming decades by putting these words in a cabinet paper, 'I say without disparagement to America or anybody else, if you want to see a backward country fairly governed, on the whole we do it better than anybody else. My conviction is that the salvation of the dark places consists in having them under British rule.' (P. R. O. Cabinet Papers file 23/43, quoted in Jon Kimche, *The Second Arab Awakening*, 1970, p. 66). On Egypt this imperious proconsul said, 'Civilization is foiled by a country which refuses to be civilized, which cannot be civilized, which will remain uncivilized to the end.' (Quoted in Kenneth Rose, *Superior Person*, 1969, p. 88).

An English visitor to India went into lyrical rhapsodies when he saw the viceregal lodge of New Delhi. 'If planning really counts as much as old and picturesque confusion, this is one of the outstanding places of history. Should the civilization of Western Europe perish, there will be this relic left in India, exhaling a grandeur which is peculiarly English and a quality of clean arrogance, superbly phrased—like the speech before Agincourt in Shakespeare's *Henry V*.' (A. S. G. Butler, quoted in Jack Simmons, *Britain and the World*, 1965, caption to plate 184).

In 1935 Gilbert Murray, the Oxford don and classicist, summed up the arrogance of the last generation thus, 'To the men of my youth, Western, especially British, civilization was simply the right road of human progress; other civilizations, if one could call them civilizations at all, were just false roads or mistakes.' (In his Romanes Lectures at Oxford in 1935, see his *From League to the United Nations*, 1948, p. 23).

The 'shoe question' in Burma brings out the petty and absurd level to which imperial *hubris* could sink. The Burmese resented if anyone

entered their pagodas with his shoes on. This had often caused friction between Burma and the Government of India when Burma was an independent state. The British simply refused to remove their shoes while entering the sacred precincts. At first they insisted on this and consequently notices were placed at the pagodas reading 'Footwearing prohibited, except to British and Europeans'. This was open insult to an honourable religion, but the Burmese tolerated it in the helplessness of their subjection. Later the younger generation of Burma protested against this and agitation grew apace. But as late as in 1941 (only seven years before Burma gained her independence) Duff Cooper's wife, while on a visit to Burma, discovered that her British friends had never visited a pagoda because they had to take off their shoes. (See Saul Rose, *Britain and South-East Asia*, 1962, p. 74).

In 1947 even a 'liberal' scholar and journalist refused to contemplate a British entry into a European union as long as Europe declined to be directed by principles of Anglo-Saxon civilization. 'Britain, especially, whose political ideas have spread over so great a part of the world, would hardly contemplate entering voluntarily into a European union whose guiding principles were not those of the liberal and Anglo-Saxon civilization.' (Guy Wint, *op. cit.*, p. 202).

In the same year a British official committee, appointed to study the prevailing state and future prospects of oriental studies in Britain, admitted in its report, 'We consider that the chief reason why these studies have not prospered in the past and why previous attempts to remedy the position have failed to achieve success lies in a traditional exclusiveness which tends to disregard and even look down upon cultures which have little in common with our own. Lord Macaulay, in his famous minute on "Indian Education" gave expression to this natural trait. . . . The survival of this attitude of mind has prevented studies such as these from being effectively recognized by the Government, by academic circles, by the undergraduate and his parents, in fact by the nation as a whole.' (Scarbrough Report, quoted in A. J. Arberry, *op. cit.*, p. 245).

'Most European thought their own way of life represented values of universal application.' Several things merged to produce 'the easy assumption that the good life was possible only within the frame-work of Western culture'. (Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Actions 1780-1850*, 1965, pp. 259-260).

In the appendix to a recent history of an oriental club in London, which lists the club's picture collection, Winston Churchill is identified as Prime Minister of Britain and the dates of his holding the office are

given, but Robert Clive gets just the dates of his birth and death with the note 'No further biographical details are needed here!' (Denys Forrest, *The Oriental: Life Story of a West End Club*, 1968, p. 226). The empire-makers occupied a nobler place in the scroll of British history than the greatest of its prime ministers.

A present-day British historian has written, 'Never in human history was power exercised with less loss of life or more beneficently than by oceanic Britain in the nineteenth century.' (Sir Arthur Bryant, "Strategy and Survival", *Illustrated London News*, 8 December 1956, reprinted in his *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 1969, p. 230. Bryant is one of the leading historians of England today and, in the opinion of several people, the most eminent of them, worthily carrying on the great traditions of English history writing).

In a book published in 1969 it is asserted that 'more than any peoples they [the British] drove humanity into a different world'. (Bartlett in his "Introduction", C. J. Bartlett, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 6).

In a book review in 1971 an anonymous writer also claimed that the Lawrence brothers 'gave the Punjab the best administration it has probably ever known'. (Review of Brian Gardner's *The East India Company* in *The Economist*, 21 August 1971, p. 47). In the same year, Peter Shore, a Labour member of parliament, remarked in the *New Statesman* that the benefits from the European Economic Community's agricultural budget which would accrue to Britain would be small because they 'will be focussed on the miserably poor peasant farmers of Southern Italy and France'. But his socialist heart wept for the plight of the farmers of New Zealand. (Quoted in Leopold Labedz, "The Path Ahead to Europe: On Losing an Empire", *Encounter*, September 1971, p. 23). Even for the 'anti-imperialist' socialists of the Great Britain of today the welfare of the Anglo-Saxon race takes priority over that of the Europeans—and this when Britain was trying its hardest to join the common market.

Let me finish this section on British rude arrogance and vaulting self-praise with two British comments.

'. . . the fierce and irrational disdain for foreigners was held by many of the governing class of Victorian England' (Kenneth Rose, *Superior Person*, 1969, p. 82).

'John Bull all through his days of empire was an ignorant, insular, self-complacent philistine, who thought he had everything to teach and nothing to learn.' (V. G. Kiernan, reviewing Ralph Russell's and Khurshidul Islam's *Three Mughal Poets* in *South Asian Review*, October 1970, p. 89).

**British Imperial Attitude in Post-Imperial Age**

In an editorial of 26 August 1969 entitled "The Great Withdrawal" *The Times* of London wrote, 'In every real sense the British withdrawal from Asia was determined in 1947 when an imperial diadem that had shone so brightly in the crown became independent India and Pakistan. Just as all Britain's imperial acquisitions farther east were acquired as bastions of the Indian Empire, so India's withdrawal meant an eventual end to the British presence elsewhere.'

Yet several British actions, policies and pronouncements indicate that the realization of the end of the empire has not dawned fully on the people of Britain to this day. They still think and behave as if they owned an imperial domain on which the sun never sets. They still regard themselves as a world power with an inalienable right to dictate policies to other countries and to preach to the areas which were once under their rule.

It is amusing to recall a recent incident in this connection. In July 1971 at the end of the British negotiations with the Common Market countries of Europe for British entry into the Market, Geoffrey Ripon, the chief British negotiator, was quoted by the B.B.C. as having declared at Luxembourg that 'it is a great day for Europe'—not for Britain. It is this kind of arrogance which refuses to die with the death of the empire.

During colonial rule over Africa one of British arguments justifying African inferiority and British right to rule over the continent was that Africa had no history before colonial rule. One would have thought that after British withdrawal this sort of nonsense, historically completely untenable, would no longer be talked about. But in 1951 Margery Perham, a leading British historian of British empire in Africa, wrote, 'until the very recent penetration of Europe the greater part of the continent was without the wheel, the plough or the transport animal, without stone houses or clothes except skins; without writing and so without history'. [Margery Perham, "The British Problem in Africa", *Foreign Affairs*, July 1951; she is the author of *Native Administration in Nigeria* (1957) and a multi-volume life of Lugard].

And in 1963 Hugh Trevor Roper, a professor of history at Oxford, said, 'perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at the present there is none; there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness. . . and darkness is not the subject of history'. (H. T. Roper, "The Rise of Christian Europe", *The Listener*, 28 November 1963; for a sharp criticism of this view, and particularly of Trevor Roper's, see Roland Oliver, *African History for the Outside World*, 1964).

In 1967 Sir Arthur Bryant, one of Britain's foremost historians, could write this of the empire and British ambition to be a great nation. 'It is said that the British Empire was made in a fit of absent-mindedness. This is untrue. It was made by the concentration, industry, self-reliance and self-discipline of countless individuals, even if the State itself, in the libertarian tradition of Britain, played only a subordinate and reluctant part in the process. What is true is that it has been discarded in a fit of absent-mindedness, and that we are now about to realise, almost certainly in increasing measure, the price which has to be paid for such absent-mindedness. What one hopes is that, as the price becomes more and more apparent, the people of this country. . . will again produce leaders, both in action and thought, who will re-inspire them with the sense of purpose and faith they have lost. We need an Aidan to re-teach us our faith and a Pitt and a Drake to show us what courage and confidence can do. Then, our time of contraction and self-defeat over, we can resume, under new forms, our ancient precedence of "teaching the nations how to live".' (Arthur Bryant, "Lest We Forget", *Illustrated London News*, 5 August 1967, reproduced in his *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 1969, pp. 222-223).

Any student of British economic development and social history since the second World War will notice that a major cause of British backwardness and discontent has been this mental outlook which refuses to acknowledge the sharp decrease in Britain's stature since the empire withered away. If facing the realities and adapting oneself to changing circumstances are signs of maturity, then Britain has yet to grow up and become an adult nation. It is true that it is painful to fall from a pedestal, and the greater the fall the more the pain, but a wise people will try to make the best of it instead of pretending to a glorious existence which is not visible to anyone else. Britain is not the only country to have lost an empire. If France and Italy, even Belgium and Holland can meet imperial adversity with aplomb, there is no excuse for Britain's continuing to live in a dreamland. The sooner she recognizes the great change in her fortunes, the better for her and for her clients like South Africa and Rhodesia.

# APPENDICES

# I

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

*Amery, Leopold Stennett (1873-1955).* Born in Gorakhpur in the United Provinces, India. Son of Charles F. Amery of the Indian Forest Department. Educated at Harrow and Balliol College, Oxford. On *The Times* editorial staff, 1899-1909, M.P., 1911-1945. Junior ministerial posts, 1919-1924. Secretary of State for Colonies, 1924-1929. Secretary of State for dominion affairs, 1925-1929. Secretary of State for India, 1940-1945. Author of many books.

*Arnold, Sir Edwin (1832-1904).* Educated at King's School, Rochester; King's College, London; and University College, Oxford. Master in King Edward's School, Birmingham, 1854-1856. Principal, Government Deccan College, Poona, 1856-1861. On editorial staff of *Daily Telegraph*, 1861-1904.

*Baden-Powell, Eden Henry (1841-1901).* Educated at St. Paul's School London. In Bengal Civil Service, 1861-1889. Judge of Punjab Chief Court, 1886-1889. Eminent authority on the Indian land system of the nineteenth century.

*Bentham, Jeremy (1784-1832).* Educated at Queen's College, Oxford. Philosopher and jurist. Author of many works.

*Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen (1840-1922).* Diplomatic Service, 1858-1870. Travelled in Muslim countries, 1877-1881, and in India, 1883-1884. Took part in the Egyptian national movement, 1881-1882. Rich landholder and breeder of Arab horses. Poet and author.

*Brailsford, Henry Noel (1873-1958).* Educated at Glasgow University. Leader writer to *Manchester Guardian*, *Tribune*, *Daily News* and *Nation*. Joined Independent Labour Party, 1907. Editor of *New Leader*, 1922-1926. Journalist and author.

*Bryce, Viscount; James (1838-1922)*. Educated at Glasgow and Oxford universities. Practised Law, 1867-1882. Regius Professer of Civil Law at Oxford, 1870-1893. M.P., 1885-1897. Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1905-1907. Ambassador to the United States, 1907 1913. Historian, political scientist, jurist, diplomat and author.

*Buchan, John; Lord Tweedsmuir (1875-1940)*. Educated at Glasgow University and Brasenose College, Oxford. Brilliant academic record. Private Secretary to Lord Milner, 1901-1903. M.P., 1927-1935. Governor General of Canada, 1935-1940. Novelist, biographer and a prolific author.

*Buchanan Claudius (1766-1815)*. Educated at Queen's College, Cambridge. Went to India as a chaplain in Bengal, 1797. Chaplain and vice-provost of Fort William College, Calcutta, 1799-1808. Author of several tracts and memoranda.

*Burke, Edmund (1729-1797)*. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin. Private Secretary to William Gerard Hamilton, 1759-1764, and to Lord Rockingham, 1765. M.P., 1766. Led the impeachment of Warren Hastings. One of the proprietors of the East India Company. Statesman, orator and philosopher.

*Carey, Rev. William (1761-1834)*. Village school master. Joined Baptist Mission, 1783. Arrived in Calcutta, 1793. Founded a mission at Serampore where, with Ward and Marshman, he did much work for the advancement of learning. Wrote many books in Marathi. Professor of Sanskrit, Bengali and Marathi, Fort William College, Calcutta, 1801. Died at Serampore.

*Carpenter, Edward (1840-1929)*. Educated at Brighton College, and Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Fellow and Lecturer at Trinity Hall till 1874. Lectured on music and science. Author and poet.

*Chamberlain, Joseph (1836-1914)*. Educated at London University School. Thrice Mayor of Birmingham. M.P., 1876-1914. Secretary of State for Colonies, 1895-1903. One of the greatest colonial secretaries.

*Chirol, Sir Valentine (1852-1929)*. Clerk in the Foreign Office,

1872-1876. Director of the Foreign Department of *The Times*, 1896-1912. Member, Royal Commission on Indian Public Services, 1912. Very influential in his time.

*Churchill, Lord Randolph Henry Spencer (1849-1895)*. Educated at Eton and Merton College, Oxford. M.P., 1874-1895. Secretary of State for India, 1885-1886. Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons, 1886. Father of Winston Spencer Churchill.

*Colebrook, Henry Thomas (1765-1837)*. Joined East India Company's service, 1783. Mathematician and Sanskrit scholar. Wrote on the Vedas, Sanskrit grammar, Jainism, Hindu law, Indian algebra, astronomy and comparative philology.

*Cromer, Earl of; Evelyn Baring (1841-1917)*. Entered Royal Artillery, 1858. Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India, 1872-1876. Member, Viceroy's Council, 1880. Consul General in Egypt, 1883-1907. An important figure in the making of British colonial policy.

*Curtis, Lionel George (1872-1955)*. Educated at Haileybury College, and New College, Oxford. Served in South Africa for several years. Beit Lecturer in Colonial History at Oxford. Secretary to Irish Conference, 1921. Adviser on Irish Affairs, Colonial Office, 1921-1924. Coined the word and evolved the concept of 'dyarchy' for India.

*Curzon of Kedleston, Marquess; George Nathaniel (1859-1925)*. Educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. M.P., 1886-1898. Viceroy of India, 1899-1905. Lord President of the Council, 1916-1919. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1919-1924, Leader of the House Lords, 1916-1924. Romanes Lecturer at Oxford, 1907. Rede Lecturer at Cambridge, 1913. One of the greatest pro-consuls of all times. Author of several books.

*Darwin, Charles Robert (1809-1882)*. Educated at Edinburgh University and Christ's College, Cambridge. On the Beagle voyage, 1831-1836. Published the *Origin of Species* on 24 November 1859, and the *Descent of Man* in 1871. Naturalist who changed the course of western thinking.

*Dicey, Albert Venn (1835-1922)*. Educated at Balliol College, Oxford. Vinerian Professor of English Law at Oxford, 1882-1909. A distinguished jurist. Held strong views on political affairs.

*Dicey, Edward (1832-1911)*. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Leader-writer for *Daily Telegraph*, 1861-1870. Editor of *Observer*, 1870-1889. Strongly advocated the annexation of Egypt. Author of many books and articles.

*Dilke, Sir Charles Wentworth (1843-1911)*. Educated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. M.P., 1868-1886 and 1892-1911. Ministerial posts, 1880-1885. A great imperial mind of his day.

*Disraeli, Benjamin; first Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-1881)*. Privately educated. M.P., 1837. Leader of the Tories in the House of Commons, 1848. Prime Minister, 1867 and 1874-1880. Statesman and man of letters. Made imperialism into a policy of state.

*Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan (1859-1930)*. Educated in medicine at Edinburgh. Practised as doctor at Southsea, 1882-1890. Contested central Edinburgh as Liberal Unionist, 1900. Creator of Sherlock Holmes. Author of over 50 works of fiction and non-fiction.

*Elphinstone, Mountstuart (1779-1859)*. Joined the East India Company as Writer, 1795. Governor of Bombay, 1819-1827. Twice refused Indian Governor Generalship. Author of several books on Indian history.

*Gladstone, William Ewart (1809-1898)*. Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. M.P., Tory 1832. Colonial Secretary, 1846. Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1852-1855. Leader of the House of Commons, 1865. Chancellor of the Exchequer again, 1859-1866 and 1868-1874. Prime Minister, 1869, 1880-1885, and 1892-1894. Romanes Lecturer at Oxford, 1892. Statesman of high distinction and the great rival of Disraeli.

*Grant, Charles (1746-1823)*. Arrived in India, 1767; retired, 1790. Entered House of Commons, 1792. Director, East India Company, 1797. Chairman, Board of Directors, East India Company, 1805. Great supporter of missionary work in India. Utilitarian reformer.

*Grey, Viscount ; Edward Grey (1862-1933).* Educated at Winchester and Balliol College, Oxford. M.P., 1885-1916. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1905-1916. Temporary Ambassador to United States, 1919.

*Grierson, Sir George Abraham (1851-1941).* Educated at Trinity College, Dublin. In the Indian Civil Service, 1873-1903. In charge of the monumental linguistic survey of India, 1898 1902. An authority on Indian languages.

*Hardie, James Kier (1856-1915).* At work in the mines until his 24th year. Editor of *Cumnock News*, 1882-1886. M.P., Labour, 1892-1895, and 1900-1915. Founder of *Labour Leader.* Chairman, Independent Labour Party. Visited India where he came to have great admiration for the Hindus.

*Henty, George Alfred (1832-1902).* Educated at Westminster and Caius College, Cambridge. Served in the Crimean War as Purveyor. Engaged for some time in mining operations in Italy. Special correspondent of the *Standard* in Austro-Italian, Franco-German and Turco-Servian Wars. Had left Cambridge for Crimea without taking the degree. Author of over 70 books for boys on imperial themes. Novelist.

*Hume, Allan Octavian (1829-1915).* Educated at Haileybury College and London University. In Bengal Civil Service, 1849-1882 (resigned). Author of several works on ornithology. Founder of the Indian National Congress.

*Hunter, Sir William Wilson (1840-1900).* In Bengal Civil Service, 1861-1887. Director General of Statistical Survey of India, 1869-1885. President, Indian Education Commission, 1882. Member, Indian Legislative Council, 1881-1887. Conceived and planned the Imperial Gazetteer of India. Historian. One of the greatest civil servants of British Indian history.

*Johnston, Sir Harry Hamilton (1858-1927).* Educated at King's College, London. Travelled in North Africa, 1879-1880. Explored Portuguese West Africa, 1882-1883. Consul General in Tunis, 1897-1899. Special Commissioner, Commander-in-Chief and Consul General in

Uganda, 1899-1901. A competent zoologist. Author of many works.

*Kaye, Sir John William (1814-1876).* Educated at Eton. Joined Indian army, 1832; resigned, 1841. Entered the home civil service of the East India Company, 1856. Succeeded J. S. Mill as Secretary of Political and Secret Department of the India Office. Retired, 1874. Military historian and novelist.

*Kimberley, Earl of; John Wodehouse (1826-1902).* Educated at Christ Church, Oxford. Junior ministerial appointments, 1852-1855. Envoy to Russia, 1856-1858. Lord Privy Seal, 1868-1870. Secretary of State for Colonies, 1870-1874 and 1880-1882. Secretary of State for India, 1882-1886 and 1892-1894. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1894-1895. Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, 1897-1902.

*Kipling, Rudyard (1865-1936).* Born at Bombay. Assistant Editor, *Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore, and *Pioneer*, Allahabad, 1882-1889. Nobel Prize for Literature, 1907. Novelist, short story writer, essayist, poet and journalist. The outstanding figure in imperial literature.

*Lane-Poole, Stanley (1854-1931).* Educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Worked in the coin department of the British Museum, 1874-1892. Archaeological research in Cairo, 1895-1897. Lecturer at the Royal Institution, 1900. Authority on Indian and Oriental coins, medieval Indian history, Islamic rule in Spain, and translator of *The Thousand Nights and One.*

*Lansbury, George (1859-1940).* M.P., Labour, 1910-1912, 1922-1940. Leader of the Labour Party, 1931-1935. Sometimes editor of *Daily Herald.* Wrote several books.

*Lewis, Sir George Cornewall (1806-1863).* Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. M.P., Liberal, 1847-1852. Editor of *Edinburgh Review*, 1852-1855. Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1855-1858. Home Secretary, 1858-1861. Secretary of State for War, 1861-1863. Statesman and author.

*Livingstone, David (1813-1873).* Educated at Glasgow University. Explored Africa, 1840-1856 and 1858-1864. Visited India, 1865-1866.

Explored East Africa 1866-1873. Famous missionary and explorer. Converted many in England to carry Christianity and civilization to Africa.

*Lloyd George, Earl* (*David Lloyd George*) (*1863-1945*). Educated privately. Solicitor by profession. M.P., Liberal, 1890-1931; Independent Liberal, 1931-1945. Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1908-1915. Prime Minister, 1916-1922. A great war leader and a great supporter of Greece against Turkey.

*Lugard, Baron; Frederick Dealtry Lugard* (*1858-1945*). In the Indian army, 1879-1888. Administrator of Uganda, 1888-1892. High Commissioner in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1906. Governor of Hong Kong, 1907-1912. Governor of Northern and Southern Nigeria, 1912-1913. Governor General of Nigeria, 1914-1919. Creator of the theory of indirect rule in the British empire.

*Lyall, Sir Alfred Comyn* (*1835-1911*). Educated at Eton. Member, Bengal Civil Service. Lieutenant Governor of North-Western Provinces, 1882-1887. Member, India Council, 1888-1902. Ford Lecturer in English History at Oxford, 1907. Poet and historian.

*MacColl, Rev. Malcolm* (*died 1907*). Educated at the Universities of Edinburgh and Naples. Curate of several churches in England. Chaplain to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. Canon of Ripon, 1884 onwards. A bitter critic of Islam and its civilization.

*MacDonald, James Ramsay* (*1866-1937*). Educated at a Board School. Secretary of Labour Party, 1900-1912. Member, Royal Commission on Indian Public Services, 1912-1914. Sometimes editor of *Socialist Review*. M.P., Labour, 1906-1918, and National Labour, 1931-1935. Leader of the Opposition, 1922. Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, January-November 1924. Prime Minister, 1929-1935. Lord President of the Council, 1935-1937. Author of many books on socialism and one on India.

*Maine, Sir Henry James Sumner* (*1822-1888*). Educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge. Brilliant academic career. Regius Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge, 1847-1854. Law Member of Viceroy's Council, 1862-1869. Corpus Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford,

1869-1878. Member, India Council, 1871. Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, 1877-1887. Wherwell Professor of International Law at Cambridge, 1887-1888.

*Margoliouth, David Samuel (1858-1940)*. Educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford. Laudian Professor of Arabic at Oxford, 1889-1937. President of Royal Asiatic Society, 1934-1937. Hibbert Lecturer, 1913. Special Lecturer in Oriental History at Punjab University, 1916-1917. Reader in Arabic Historians at Calcutta University. Wilson Lecturer at Bombay University, 1929. Author of several books on Islam and Christianity.

*Masters, John (born 1914)*. Educated at Wellington and Sandhurst. In the Indian army, 1934-1948. Novelist of the Indian scene.

*Max-Muller, Friedrich (1823-1900)*. Educated at Dessau and Leipsic, and universities of Leipsic and Berlin. Taylorian Professor of Modern Languages at Oxford, 1854. Corpus Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford, 1868-1900. Hibbert Lecturer, 1878. Gifford Lecturer, 1888-1892. Author of many books on Sanskrit literature and Hinduism. Editor of the Rig Veda and of the Sacred Books of the East. Discovered Hindu civilization for the Indians.

*Mill, James (1773-1836)*. Educated at Edinburgh in divinity. Editor of *Literary Journal*, 1802-1805. Editor of *St. James's Chronicle*, 1805-1807. Planned and wrote his *History of India*, 1806-1818. Given a post in the India Office, 1819. Utilitarian philosopher and father of John Stuart Mill.

*Milner, Viscount ; Sir Alfred Milner (1854-1925)*. Educated in Germany ; King's College, London ; Balliol College, Oxford. On the staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other papers, 1882-1885. Private Secretary to Goschen, 1887-1889. Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, 1897-1901. Governor of Transvaal and Orange River Colony, 1901-1905. High Commissioner for South Africa, 1897-1905. Member, War Cabinet, 1916-1918. Secretary of State for War, 1918-1919. Secretary of State for Colonies, 1919-1921. A pro-consul of immense influence and considerable power.

*Monier-Williams, Sir Monier (1819-1899)*. Educated at King's

College, London; Balliol College, Oxford; Haileybury College; University College, Oxford. Professor of Sanskrit at Haileybury College, 1844-1858. Visited India, 1875-1877, 1883-1884. Chairman, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford, 1883-1896. Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, from 1860. Author of several works including a Sanskrit grammar, an English-Sanskrit dictionary, and studies of Brahmanism and Buddhism.

*Muir, Sir William (1819-1905)*. Educated at Edinburgh and Glasgow universities. Entered Bengal Civil Service, 1837. Member, Viceroy's Council, 1867. Lieutenant Governor of North-Western provinces, 1868. Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1874. Member, India Council, 1876. Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh University, 1885-1902. Wrote several books on Islamic history. Carried on a long controversy with Sayyid Ahmad Khan on the Holy Prophet.

*Napier, Sir Charles James (1782-1853)*. In the army, 1794-1815. Lived in Greece, 1819-1825. Appointed to a command in India, 1841. Conquered Sind, 1842-1844. Placed in charge of Sind, 1844-1847. Returned to England, 1851.

*Olivier, Baron ; Sydney Olivier (1859-1943)*. Educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Entered Colonial Cffice, 1882. Secretary of Fabian Society, 1886-1890. Auditor General of Leeward Islands, 1895-1896. Colonial Secretary in Jamaica, 1899-1904. Governor of Jamaica, 1907-1913. Secretary of State for India, 1924. Contributor to *Fabian Essays* and *Fabian Tracts*. A minor poet.

*Orwell, George ; Eric Blair (died 1950)*. Educated at Eton. For some years in the India Police Service, serving in Burma. Resigned to devote himself to literature. Novelist and essayist. A major figure in modern literature.

*Passfield, Baron ; Sidney James Webb (1859-1947)*. Educated at City of London College. In the British civil service, 1875-1891. Honorary Professor of Public Administration, London School of Economics, 1912-1927. M. P., Labour, 1922-1929. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1929-1930. Secretary of State for Colonies, 1929-1931. One of the fathers of Fabianism and Socialism in Britain. Prolific writer on economic and social topics, Husband of Beatrice Webb.

*Peel, Earl ; William Robert Wellesley Peel (1867-1937)*. Educated at Harrow and Balliol College, Oxford. Minor ministerial posts, 1917-1922. Secretary of State for India, 1922-1924 and 1928-1929. Member, Indian Round Table Conference, 1930-1931. Member, Royal Commission on Palestine, 1936-1937.

*Prinsep, Henry Thoby (1792-1878)*. Arrived in Bengal, 1809. Member, Indian Supreme Council, 1843. Director of East India Company, 1850. An orientalist of note.

*Roberts of Kandhar, Earl of ; Frederick Sleigh Roberts (1832-1914)*. Educated at Eton and Sandhurst. Entered Bengal Artillery, 1851. Field Marshal, 1895. Commander-in-Chief of India, 1885-1893. Commander-in-Chief of South Africa, 1899-1900. Commander-in-Chief of British Army, 1901-1904.

*Rhodes, Cecil John (1853-1902)*. Educated at Oriel College, Oxford. Originator of the Cape-to-Cairo scheme. Deputy Commissioner of Bechuanaland, 1884-1885. Prime Minister of Cape Colony, 1890-1896. Knew Gibbon almost by heart. One of the greatest imperialists in British colonial history.

*Rosebery, Earl of ; Archibald Primrose (1847-1929)*. Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. Lord Privy Seal, 1885. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1886 and 1892-1894. Prime Minister and Lord President of the Council, 1894-1895. Biographer and essayist.

*Salisbury, Marquess of; Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil (1830-1903)*. Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. M. P., Conservative, 1853-1868. Secretary of State for India, 1866-1867 and 1874-1878. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1878-1880, 1885-1886, 1887-1892 and 1895-1900. Prime Minister, 1885-1886, 1886 1892 and 1895-1902. Very influential in policy-making.

*Seeley, Sir John Robert (1834-1895)*. Educated at Christ's College, Cambridge. Professor of Latin, University College, London, 1863-1869. *Ecce Homo* published anonymously, 1865. Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, 1869-1895. Teacher of outstanding attraction. Held strong imperial views.

*Shaw, George Bernard (1856-1950)*. Joined Fabian Society, 1884. Nobel Prize for Literature, 1925. Journalist, critic, novelist and, above

all, dramatist. Editor of *Fabian Essays*. Author of many Fabian tracts on Socialism.

*Sidgwick, Henry (1838-1900)*. Educated at Rugby and Trinity College, Cambridge. Lecturer in Moral and Political Philosophy at Cambridge, 1859-1875. Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge, 1883-1900. Author of several works on philosophy and politics.

*Smith, Vincent Arthur (1848-1920)*. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin. Brilliant academic record. In the Indian Civil Service, 1871-1900. After retirement devoted his life to work on Indian history, numismatics and archaeology. Taught Indian history for some time at Trinity College, Dublin. Author of several works on Indian history and art.

*Stanley, Baron ; Henry Edward John Stanley* (1827-1903). Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. Entered Foreign Office, 1847. Secretary of Legation at Athens, 1854-1859.

*Stansgate, Lord ; William Wedgwood Benn (1877-1960)*. Educated at London University. M. P., Liberal, 1906-1927. Joined Labour Party, 1927. M. P., Labour, 1928-1941. Secretary of State for India, 1929-1931. Secretary of State for Air, 1945-1946. Very active in Indian affairs on the side of the Congress and the Hindus.

*Stead, William Thomas (1849-1912)*. Editor of *Northern Echo*, 1871-1880. Assistant Editor, 1880-1883, and Editor, 1883-1889, of *Pall Mall Gazette*. Founded *Review of Reviews*, 1890. Founder of a prolonged campaign against the war with the Transvaal. Opposed to militarism. Author of many books.

*Steel, Flora Annie (1847-1929)*. Lived in India till 1889. Provincial Inspectress of Government and Aided Schools, Punjab, for some years. Novelist and short story writer.

*Stephen, Sir James Fitzjames (1829-1894)*. Educated at Eton; King's College, London; Trinity College, Cambridge. Took silk, 1868. Law Member, Viceroy's Council, 1869-1872. Appointed a judge, 1879; retired 1891.

*Thompson, Edward John (died 1946).* Educational missionary at Bankura (Bengal), 1910-1922. Fought in Mesopotamia and Palestine, 1916-1918. Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. Wrote two novels about India. Author of several books, including two on Indian history.

*Webb, Mrs. Sidney ; Beatrice Potter* (1858-1943). Personally investigated social and industrial conditions in Britain. Member, Royal Commission on Poor Law and Unemployment, 1905-1909. Wrote many books, pamphlets and tracts on economic and social topics and on Socialism, some in collaboration with her husband, Sidney Webb, later Baron Passfield. An important figure in British Socialist thinking.

*Woodruff, Phulip ; Phulip Mason (born 1906).* In the Indian Civil Service, 1928-1947. Director of Studies in Race Relations, Chatham House, 1952-1958. Director, Institute of Race Relations, 1958-1970. Historian of the Indian Civil Service. Novelist.

*Yeats-Brown, Francis (1886-1944).* Assistant Editor of *Spectator*, 1926-1928. Some time in the Indian Army. Author of *Bengal Lancer* and *Lancer at Large* which had considerable popular appeal in their day.

# II

## BRITISH PRIME MINISTERS

The exact origin of the term 'prime minister' is the subject of several legal treatises; and the question to whom the designation should first be applied is still a controversial point. Generally Sir Robert Walpole is taken to be the first holder of the office; therefore our list begins with him. According to Sir William Anson, 'a man becomes prime minister by kissing the king's hands and accepting the commission to form a ministry'. Therefore the dates given below are those on which the royal hands were kissed, not those on which the oath was taken.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir Robert Walpole | 15 May 1730 |
| Earl of Wilmington | 16 Feb. 1742 |
| Henry Pelham | 27 Aug. 1743 |
| Duke of Newcastle | 16 Mar. 1754 |
| Duke of Devonshire | 16 Nov. 1756 |
| Duke of New Castle | 2 July 1757 |
| Earl of Bute | 26 May 1762 |
| George Grenville | 16 Apr. 1763 |
| Marquess of Rockingham | 13 July 1765 |
| Earl of Chatham | 30 July 1766 |
| Duke of Grafton | 14 Oct. 1768 |
| Lord North | 28 Jan. 1770 |
| Marquess of Rockingham | 27 Mar. 1782 |
| Earl of Shelburne | 4 July 1782 |
| Duke of Portland | 2 Apr. 1783 |
| William Pitt | 19 Dec. 1783 |
| Henry Addington | 17 Mar. 1801 |
| William Pitt | 10 May 1804 |
| Lord Grenville | 11 Feb. 1806 |
| Duke of Portland | 31 Mar. 1807 |
| Spencer Perceval | 4 Oct. 1809 |
| Earl of Liverpool | 8 June 1812 |
| George Canning | 10 Apr. 1827 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Viscount Goderich | 31 Aug. 1827 |
| Duke of Wellington | 22 Jan. 1828 |
| Earl Grey | 22 Nov. 1830 |
| Viscount Melbourne | 16 July 1834 |
| Duke of Wellington | 17 Nov. 1834 |
| Sir Robert Peel | 10 Dec. 1834 |
| Viscount Melbourne | 18 Apr. 1835 |
| Sir Robert Peel | 30 Aug. 1841 |
| Lord John Russell | 30 June 1846 |
| Earl of Derby | 23 Feb. 1852 |
| Earl of Aberdeen | 19 Dec. 1852 |
| Viscount Palmerston | 6 Feb. 1855 |
| Earl of Derby | 20 Feb. 1858 |
| Viscount Palmerston | 12 June 1859 |
| Earl Russell | 29 Oct. 1865 |
| Earl of Derby | 28 June 1866 |
| Benjamin Disraeli | 27 Feb. 1868 |
| William Ewart Gladstone | 3 Dec. 1868 |
| Benjamin Disraeli | 20 Feb. 1874 |
| William Ewart Gladstone | 23 Apr. 1880 |
| Marquess of Salisbury | 23 June 1885 |
| William Ewart Gladstone | 1 Feb. 1886 |
| Marquess of Salisbury | 25 July 1886 |
| William Ewart Gladstone | 15 Aug. 1892 |
| Earl of Rosebery | 5 Mar. 1894 |
| Marquess of Salisbury | 25 June 1895 |
| Arthur James Balfour | 12 July 1902 |
| Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman | 5 Dec. 1905 |
| Herbert Henry Asquith | 7 Apr. 1908 |
| David Lloyd George | 7 Dec. 1916 |
| Andrew Bonar Law | 23 Oct. 1922 |
| Stanley Baldwin | 22 May 1923 |
| James Ramsay MacDonald | 22 Jan. 1924 |
| Stanley Baldwin | 4 Nov. 1924 |
| James Ramsay MacDonald | 5 June 1929 |
| Stanley Baldwin | 7 June 1935 |
| Arthur Neville Chamberlain | 28 May 1937 |
| Winston Spencer Churchill | 10 May 1940 |
| Clement Richard Attlee | 26 July 1945 |

# III

## SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

It is significant that till 1854 the departments of war and colonies were combined, and the minister in charge of these carried the title of Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Henry Dundas | 11 July | 1794 |
| Robert Hobart | 17 Mar. | 1801 |
| Earl Camden | 12 May | 1804 |
| Viscount Castlereagh | 10 June | 1805 |
| William Windham | 14 Feb. | 1806 |
| Viscount Castlereagh | 25 Mar. | 1807 |
| Earl of Liverpool | 31 Oct. | 1809 |
| Earl Bathurst | 11 June | 1812 |
| Viscount Goderich | 30 Apr. | 1827 |
| William Huskisson | 3 Sep. | 1827 |
| Sir George Murray | 30 May | 1828 |
| Viscount Goderich | 22 Nov. | 1830 |
| Lord Stanley | 3 Apr. | 1833 |
| Thomas Spring Rice | 5 June | 1834 |
| Earl of Aberdeen | Nov. | 1834 |
| Lord Glenelg | 18 Apr. | 1835 |
| Marquess of Normanby | 20 Feb. | 1839 |
| Lord John Russell | 30 Aug. | 1839 |
| Lord Stanley | 3 Sep. | 1841 |
| William Ewart Gladstone | 23 Dec. | 1845 |
| Earl Grey | 3 July | 1846 |
| Sir John Somerset Pakington | 27 Feb. | 1852 |
| Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyme | 8 Dec. | 1852 |
| Sir George Grey | 10 June | 1854 |
| Sidney Herbert | 8 Feb. | 1855 |
| Lord John Russell | 23 Feb. | 1855 |
| Sir William Molesworth | 21 July | 1855 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Henry Labouchere | 17 Nov. 1855 |
| Lord Stanley | 26 Feb. 1858 |
| Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton | 31 May 1858 |
| Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyme | 18 June 1858 |
| Edward Cardwell | 4 Apr. 1864 |
| Earl of Carnarvon | 6 July 1866 |
| Duke of Buckingham and Chandos | 8 Mar. 1867 |
| Earl Granville | 10 Dec. 1868 |
| Earl of Kimberley | 6 July 1870 |
| Earl of Carnarvon | 21 Feb. 1874 |
| Sir Michael Hicks Beach | 4 Feb. 1878 |
| Earl of Kimberley | 28 Apr. 1880 |
| Earl of Derby | 11 Dec. 1882 |
| Frederick Arthur Stanley | 24 June 1885 |
| Earl Granville | 6 Feb. 1886 |
| Edward Stanhope | 3 Aug. 1886 |
| Sir Henry Thurston Holland | 14 Jan. 1887 |
| Marquess of Ripon | 17 Aug. 1892 |
| Joseph Chamberlain | 28 June 1895 |
| Alfred Lyttelton | 9 Oct. 1903 |
| Earl of Elgin | 11 Dec. 1905 |
| Earl of Crewe | 16 Apr. 1908 |
| Lewis Harcourt | 7 Nov. 1910 |
| Andrew Bonar Law | 27 May 1915 |
| Walter Hume Long | 11 Dec. 1916 |
| Viscount Milner | Jan. 1919 |
| Winston Spencer Churchill | 14 Feb. 1921 |
| Duke of Devonshire | 25 Oct. 1922 |
| James Henry Thomas | 23 Jan. 1924 |
| Leopold Stennett Amery | 7 Nov. 1924 |
| Lord Passfield | 8 June 1929 |
| James Henry Thomas | 26 Aug. 1931 |
| Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister | 9 Nov. 1931 |
| Malcolm MacDonald | 7 June 1935 |
| James Henry Thomas | 27 Nov. 1935 |
| William Ormsby Gore | 29 May 1936 |
| Malcolm MacDonald | 16 May 1938 |
| Lord Lloyd | 13 May 1940 |
| Lord Moyne | 8 Feb. 1941 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Viscount Cranborne | 23 Feb. 1942 |
| Oliver Stanley | 24 Nov. 1942 |
| George Henry Hall | 3 Aug. 1945 |
| Arthur Creech Jones | 7 Oct. 1946 |

# IV

## SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

On 1 July 1925 the responsibility for 'the autonomous communities within the Empire' was transferred from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, whose office was created on that day by executive act. Until 1938 the two secretaryships were often, but not always, held by the same minister.

| | |
|---|---|
| Leopold Stennett Amery | 7 Nov. 1924 |
| Lord Passfield | 8 June 1929 |
| James Henry Thomas | 13 June 1930 |
| Malcolm MacDonald | 27 Nov. 1935 |
| Lord Stanley | 16 May 1938 |
| Malcolm MacDonald | 4 Nov. 1938 |
| Viscount Caldecote | 2 Feb. 1939 |
| Robert Anthony Eden | 4 Sep. 1939 |
| Viscount Caldecote | 15 May 1940 |
| Viscount Cranborne | 4 Oct. 1940 |
| Clement Richard Attlee | 23 Feb. 1942 |
| Viscount Cranborne | 28 Sep. 1943 |
| Lord Addison | 3 Aug. 1945 |

# V

# PRESIDENTS OF THE (INDIAN) BOARD OF CONTROL

Pitt's India Act of 1784 placed the East India Company under the superintendence of six Commissioners for the Affairs of India. Till 1793 the Home Secretary was first commissioner, but in that year the Board of Control, as the Commissioners were usually called, was given a distinct and salaried President of its own. The Board was abolished by the Government of India Act of 1858, and its functions transferred to the Secretary of State for India.

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Sydney | 3 Sept. 1784 |
| Lord Grenville | 12 Mar. 1790 |
| Henry Dundas | 28 June 1793 |
| Viscount Lewisham | 19 May 1801 |
| Viscount Castlereagh | 12 July 1802 |
| Lord Minto | 12 Feb. 1806 |
| Thomas Grenville | 16 July 1806 |
| George Tierney | 1 Oct. 1806 |
| Robert Dundas | 6 Apr. 1807 |
| Earl of Harroby | 17 July 1809 |
| Robert Dundas | 13 Nov. 1809 |
| Earl of Buckinghamshire | 7 Apr. 1812 |
| George Canning | 20 June 1816 |
| Charles Bathurst | 16 Jan. 1821 |
| Charles Watkin Williams Wynn | 8 Feb. 1822 |
| Viscount Melville | 31 July 1828 |
| Lord Ellenborough | 24 Sep. 1828 |
| Charles Grant | 6 Dec. 1830 |
| Lord Ellenborough | 20 Dec. 1834 |
| Sir John Hobhouse | 29 Apr. 1835 |
| Lord Ellenborough | 9 Sep. 1841 |
| Lord Fitzgerald | 28 Oct. 1841 |
| Earl of Ripon | 23 May 1843 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir John Hobhouse | 10 July 1846 |
| Lord Passmore | 5 Feb. 1852 |
| John Charles Herries | 28 Feb. 1852 |
| Sir Charles Wood | 30 Dec. 1852 |
| Robert Vernon Smith | 3 Mar. 1855 |
| Earl of Ellenborough | 6 Mar. 1858 |
| Lord Stanley | 5 June 1858 |

# VI

## SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR INDIA

The Government of India Act of 1858 transferred the control of India from the East India Company to the Crown, and ministerial responsibility for Indian affairs from the President of the Board of Control to the Secretary of State forIndia in Council. By the Government of India Act of 1935 the Secretary of State acquired the title of 'Secretary of State for India and for Burma'.

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Stanley | 2 Sep. 1858 |
| Sir Charles Wood | 18 June 1859 |
| Earl of Ripon | 16 Feb. 1866 |
| Viscount Cranborne | 6 July 1866 |
| Sir Stafford Northcote | 8 Mar. 1867 |
| Duke of Argyll | 9 Dec. 1868 |
| Marquess of Salisbury | 21 Feb. 1874 |
| Viscount Cranbrook | 2 Apr. 1878 |
| Marquess of Hartington | 28 Apr. 1880 |
| Earl of Kimberley | 16 Dec. 1882 |
| Lord Randolph Churchill | 24 June 1885 |
| Earl of Kimberley | 6 Feb. 1886 |
| Viscount Cross | 3 Aug. 1886 |
| Earl of Kimberley | 18 Aug. 1892 |
| Henry Hartley Fowler | 10 Mar. 1894 |
| Lord George Francis Hamilton | 4 July 1895 |
| William St. John Brodrick | 9 Oct. 1903 |
| John Morley | 11 Dec. 1905 |
| Earl of Crewe | 7 Nov. 1910 |
| Joseph Austen Chamberlain | 27 May 1915 |
| Edwin Samuel Montagu | 20 July 1917 |
| Viscount Peel | 21 Mar. 1922 |
| Lord Olivier | 23 Jan. 1924 |
| Earl of Birkenhead | 7 Nov. 1924 |
| Viscount Peel | 1 Nov. 1928 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| William Wedgwood Benn | 8 June | 1929 |
| Sir Samuel Hoare | 26 Aug. | 1931 |
| Marquess of Zetland | 7 June | 1935 |
| Leopold Stennett Amery | 15 May | 1940 |
| Lord Pethick-Lawrence | 3 Aug. | 1945 |
| Earl of Listowel | 23 Apr. | 1947 |

# VII

## GOVERNORS GENERAL OF INDIA

(*i*) *Governors General of Fort William in Bengal under Regulating Act of 1773:*

(The names of officiating and temporary holders are in italics).

| | |
|---|---|
| Warren Hastings | 20 Oct. 1774 |
| *Sir John Macpherson* | 8 Feb. 1785 |
| Earl Cornwallis | 12 Sep. 1786 |
| Sir John Shore | 28 Oct. 1793 |
| *Sir A. Clarke* | 17 Mar. 1798 |
| Earl of Mornington | 18 May 1798 |
| Marquess Cornwallis (2nd time) | 30 July 1805 |
| *Sir George Barlow* | 10 Oct. 1805 |
| Baron Minto I | 30 July 1807 |
| Earl of Moira | 4 Oct. 1813 |
| *John Adam* | 13 Jan. 1823 |
| Baron Amherst | 1 Aug. 1823 |
| *William Butterworth Bayley* | 13 Mar. 1828 |
| Lord William Cavendish-Bentinck | 4 July 1828 |

(*ii*) *Governors General of India under Charter Act of 1833:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord William Cavendish-Bentinck | 16 June 1834 |
| *Sir Charles Metcalfe* | 20 Mar. 1835 |
| Baron of Auckland | 4 Mar. 1836 |
| Baron Ellenborough | 28 Feb. 1842 |
| *William Wilberforce Bird* | 15 June 1844 |
| Sir Henry Hardinge | 23 July 1844 |
| Earl of Dalhousie | 12 Jan. 1848 |
| Viscount Canning | 29 Feb. 1856 |

(*iii*) *Governors General and Viceroys under Government of India Act of 1858:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Viscount Canning | 1 Nov. 1858 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Earl of Elgin I | 12 Mar. 1862 |
| *Sir Robert Napier* | 21 Nov. 1863 |
| *Sir William T. Denison* | 2 Dec. 1863 |
| Sir John Lawrence | 12 Jan. 1864 |
| Earl of Mayo | 12 Jan. 1869 |
| *Sir John Strachey* | 9 Feb 1872 |
| *Lord Napier* | 23 Feb. 1872 |
| Baron Northbrook | 3 May 1872 |
| Baron Lytton I | 12 Apr. 1876 |
| Marquess of Ripon | 8 June 1880 |
| Earl of Dufferin | 13 Dec. 1884 |
| Marquess of Lansdowne | 10 Dec. 1888 |
| Earl of Elgin II | 20 Jan. 1894 |
| Baron Curzon of Kedleston | 6 Jan. 1899 |
| *Lord Ampthill* | 30 Apr. 1904 |
| Baron Curzon (reappointed) | 13 Dec. 1904 |
| Earl of Minto II | 18 Nov. 1905 |
| Baron Hardinge | 23 Nov. 1910 |
| Baron Chelmsford | 4 Apr. 1916 |
| Earl of Reading | 2 Apr. 1921 |
| *Lord Lytton II* | 10 Apr. 1925 |
| Earl of Reading | 6 Aug. 1925 |
| Lord Irwin | 3 Apr. 1926 |
| *Lord Goschen* | 29 June 1929 |
| Earl of Willingdon | 18 Apr. 1931 |
| *Sir George Stanley* | 16 May 1934 |
| Marquess of Linlithgow | 18 Apr. 1936 |
| Earl Wavell | 20 Oct. 1943 |
| Viscount Mountbatten | 24 Mar. 1947 |

# A NOTE ON BOOKS

The following is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive bibliography. I have merely listed works which I have found useful during my reading and which, I hope, will attract the reader who is interested in delving deeper into the subject. Some items have been cited more than once in order to make each chapter reference self-sufficient. All books were published in London, unless otherwise stated.

## CHAPTER 1

### Imperialism in General


Bodelsen, C.A., *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism*, 2nd ed. 1960. An interesting interpretation.

Hobson, J.A.H., *Imperialism: A Study*, 1902. Now a minor classic. Emphasizes the economic factor.

Koebner, Richard and Schmidt, Helmut Dan, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political World, 1840-1960*, Cambridge, 1964. Comprehensive but slightly confusing.

Langer, W.L., *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, New York, 2nd ed. 1951.

Moon, Parker, *Imperialism and World Politics*, New York, 1926.

Semmel, Bernard, *Imperialism and Social Reform*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960.

Thornton, A.P., *Doctrines of Imperialism*, New York, 1965. Sweeps down from the ancient times to the modern. Thought-provoking and lively.

Winslow, E.M., *The Pattern of Imperialism: A Study in the Theories of Power*, New York, 1948. Power related to imperialism.


### History of British Imperialism


Carrington, C.E., *The British Overseas*, 1950. A work on imperial history by an imperialist.

Dod, Agnes F., *A Short History of the British Empire*, 1925. A popular treatment.

Egerton, H.E., *British Colonial Policy in the Twentieth Century*, 1922.

Fieldhouse, D.K., *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century*, 1966.

Gladstone, W.E., "England's Mission", *The Nineteenth Century*, September 1878.

Harlow, V.T., *The Founding of the Second British Empire 1763-1793*, Vol. I 1952, Vol. II 1964. The second volume is relevant.

Huttenback, Robert A., *The British Imperial Experience*, New York, 1966. An American view of certain important incidents in British imperial history.

Knaplund, Paul, *Britain, Commonwealth and the Empire*, 1956. A textbook in modern use.

Newton, A.P., *A Hundred Years of the British Empire*, 1940. An English historian on what he knows is slipping away. A general survey, but offers a peep into the imperial mind.

Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The British Empire: A Report on its Structure and Problems*, 1937. A group study which leads nowhere.

Taylor, A.J.P., *English History 1914-1945*, Oxford, 1966. The last in the Oxford history series. Absorbing reading. Written with grace and authority.

Trevelyan, G.M., *British History in the Nineteenth Century and After*, several editions. The work of a master who writes like the nineteenth century historians on a large canvas and with unlimited knowledge and confidence.

Walker, Eric A., *The British Empire: Its Structure and Spirit*, 1943. In praise of the Empire and all that it stands for. A swan song among the popularisers of the empire.

**Nature of British Imperialism**


Bennett, George (ed.), *The Concept of Empire: Burke to Attlee 1774-1947*, 1953. A collection of excerpts from writings illustrating imperial opinions and attitudes. Very useful.

Carrington, C.E., *The Liquidation of the British Empire*, 1961. An unrepentant imperialist gives a spirited reply to the critics and detractors of the empire.

Faber, Richard, *The Vision and the Need: Late Victorian Imperialist Aims*, 1966. Good reading.

Harlow, V.T., *The Character of British Imperialism*, 1939.

Hinden, Rita, *Empire and After: A Study of British Imperial Attitudes*, 1949. The work of a leftist.

Robinson, Ronald, et. al., *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, New York, 1961.

Stokes, Eric, *The Political Ideas of English Imperialism*, Oxford, 1960. The inaugural lecture at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. A little gem of a booklet.

Thornton, A.P., *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, 1959. Vigorous, lively and provocative. At places irreverent. A very good book indeed.

Thornton, A.P., *For the File on Empire: Essays and Reviews*, 1968. Some short, some long; some perfunctory, some profound. Shows his love-hate relationship to imperialism.


**Documents on Imperial Policy in India**


Keith, A.B. (ed.), *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy 1750-1921*, 1922, 2 vols. An old work, but breathes the air of high imperialism.

Philips, C.H. (ed.), *The Evolut on of India and Pakistan 1858-1947*, Oxford, 1962. Completes the story begun by Keith, but gives room to Indian reaction to British imperialism.

Keith, A.B. (ed.), *British Colonial Policy: Selected Speeches and Documents, 1763-1917*, 1918, 2 vols. The empire outside India.

## CHAPTER 2


### British Imperialism and Classical Imperialism

Callander, T., *The Athenian Empire and the British*, 1961.

Brunt, P.A., "Reflections on British and Roman Imperialism", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (The Hague), April 1965.

Bryce, James, *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India*, Oxford, 1914.

Charlesworth, M.P., *The Roman Empire*, 1951. In the Home University Library series.

Strayer, Joseph R., "Some Reflections on Roman and Modern Imperialism", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, October 1966.

Cramb, J.A., *The Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain*, 1915.

Cromer, Lord, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, 1910.

Lugard, Lord, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 2nd ed. 1923.

Trevelyan, C.E., *On the Education of the People of India*, 1838. These last four books make a specific comparison between classical imperialism and the British empire in India.

### French Imperialism

Brunschwig, H., *Mythes et Realites de l'imperialism colonial francais, 1871-1914*, Paris, 1960.

Deschamps, H., *Les Methodes et les Doctrines coloniales de la France*, Paris, 1953.

Hardy, G., *Histoire sociale de la Colonisation francaise*, Paris, 1953. For the earlier period.

Honataux, G. and Martineau, A., *Histoire des colonies francaises*, Paris, 1931, 4 vols. The most comprehensive modern work.

Leger, Jean-Marc, *Afrique francaise: Afrique Nouvelle*, Montreal, 1958.

Martineau, A., *Dupleix et l'Inde francaise*, Paris, 1920-28. 4 vol. A detailed study of French rule in India.

Martineau, A , *Bussy et l'Inde francaise*, Paris, 1935.

Richard-Molard, J., *Afrique Occidentale francaise*, Paris, 1956.

Easton, Stewart C., *The Twilight of European Colonialism: A Political Analysis*, 1961. Part III deals with France. Facts overpower analysis.

Lewis, Martin Deming, "One Hundred Million 'Frenchmen' Theory in French Colonial Policy", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, January 1962.

Priestley, H.I., *France Overseas : A Study of Modern Imperialism*, New York, 1938.

Roberts, Stephen H., *The History of French Colonial Policy 1870-1925*, 1929.

Sen, S.P., *The French in India 1763-1816*, Calcutta, 1958. Interesting as an Indian view.

Thompson, Virginia and Adloff, Richard, *French West Africa*, 1958. In many ways the best modern study in English.

**The Man on the Spot**

Flint, J.E., *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria*, New York, 1960.

Knorr, K.E., *British Colonial Theories 1570-1850*, Toronto, 2nd ed. 1963.

Lambrick, H T., *Sir Charles Napier and Sind*, Oxford, 1952.

Oliver, Roland, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa*, New York, 1957.

Perham, Margery, *Lugard*, 1956-60, 2 vols.

Thornton, A.P., *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, 1959. No serious or detailed study of the man on the spot has yet appeared; which is a great pity.

**The Imperial Associations**

*Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, London, 1869 onward.

*Imperial Federation: Report of the Conference held on 29 July 1884 at the Westminster Palace Hotel*, 1884.

Kendle, J.E., *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911: A Study in Imperial Organization and Politics*; University of London Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), 1965.

**Indirect Rule**

Lugard, Lord, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 2nd ed. 1923.

Perham, Margery, *Lugard: The Years of Adventure 1858-1898*, 1956.

Perham, Margery, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, 1960.

Flint, J.E., *Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria*, New York, 1960. Goldie's writings and despatches make up a commentary on the theories of Lugard.

## CHAPTER 3

**The Economic Motive in Imperialism**

Brown, Michael Barratt, *After Imperialism*, 1963. The first five chapters are relevant.

Foster, W., *England's Quest for Eastern Trade*, 1933. Recounts the various British efforts to capture Asian trade and the early history of the East India Company.

Imlah, A.H., *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica*, Cambridge, Mass., 1958.

Pares, Richard, "Economic Factors in the History of Empire", *Economic Historical Review*, vol. 7 (1937).

Schuyler, R.L., *The Fall of the Old Colonial System: A Study in British Free Trade 1770-1870*, New York, 1945.

Woolf, L.S., *Empire and Commerce in Africa: A Study in Economic Imperialism*, 1920.

**The Element of Racial Superiority in Imperialism**

Dilke, Charles, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-Speaking Countries during 1866 and 1867*, 1868, 2 vols.

Dilke, Charles, *Problems of Greater Britain*, 1890.
Froude, James, *England and the Colonies*, n.d.
Froude, James, *Short Studies in Great Subjects*, new ed. 1893.
Ruskin, John, *Inaugural Lecture at Oxford*, 1870.
Rosebery, Lord, *On British Empire*, 1884.
Rosebery, Lord, *Questions of Empire*, 1900.

**Christianity and Imperialism**

Blaikie, G.W., *Personal Life of David Livingston*, 1880.
Younghusband, F., *The Heart of a Continent*, 1896.
Kaye, J.W., *The Administration of the East India Company*, 1853.
Groves, C.P., *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, Vol. I 1948, Vol. II 1954.
Halevy, Elie, *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, French ed. 1923, 1st English ed. 1924, 2nd rev. ed. 1949, 6 vols.
Latourette, K.S., *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 1938-45, 7 vols. The most detailed treatment available.
Martin, K.L.P., *Missionaries and Annexation in the Pacific*, 1924.
Neill, Stephen, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, 1966. Chapter III on India; Chapter VIII on Africa.
Oliver, R., *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 1952.

**Humanitarianism (Slave Trade)**

Coupland, R., *The British Anti-Slavery Movement*, 1933. Very well organized and full of insight.
Williams, E., *Capitalism and Slavery*, Chapel Hill, 1944. Critical of Coupland for neglecting the economic aspects.

**Expansion through Preventive Self-Defence**

Fraser-Tytler, W.K., *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, 1950, 3rd ed. rev. by Sir M.C. Gillett, 1967.

Surprisingly no proper study of this rather important aspect of imperialism has yet been done, though several writers touch upon it in their books. Fraser-Tytler's is the clearest treatment that I have come across.

**Concern about Deterioration in English Character**

Dicey, A.V., *England's Case against Home Rule*, 1886.

Durand, Mortimer, *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall, P.C., K.C.B., G.C.I.E., D.C.L., LL.D.*, 1913.

Milner, Lord, *The Nation and the Empire*, 1913. Collection of his speeches with an introduction.

Ronaldshay, Earl of, *The Life of Lord Curzon: being the authorized Biography of George Nathaniel Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.*, 1928, 3 vols. Still remains the standard biography.

Townsend, Meredith, "Will England Retain India?", *Contemporary Review*, June 1888.

**The Idea of Progress**

Shelves are full of books on this subject. On Darwin, the first and most effective prophet of the idea, the best books are:

Barnet, A.S. (ed.), *A Century of Darwin*, 1958. Traces his influence and impact.

Beer, Sir G. de (ed.), *Evolution by Natural Selection*, Cambridge, 1958. Contains the original papers by Darwin and Wallace.

Himmelfarb, G., *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution, 1959.*

The development and character of nineteenth century thinking is well sketched in:

Bowle, J., *Political Opinion in the Nineteenth Century*, 1954.

Somervelle, D.C., *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 6th ed. 1950.

**Imperialism as a Religion**

Here again a deep study of this aspect awaits an historian. The following, however, contain striking flashes which illuminate the basic concept:

Cross, Colin, *The Liberals in Power 1905-1914*, 1963.

Dicey, A.V., *Law and Opinion in England in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. 1914.

Russell, Bertrand, *Portraits from Memory and other Essays*, 1958.

## CHAPTER 4

### Liberal Imperialism

Two general studies provide a good introduction to the subject:

Bullock, A.L.C. and Shock, M. (eds.), *The Liberal Tradition from Fox to Keynes*, 1956. Brings together extracts from writings by Liberal thinkers and statesmen with a perceptive introduction.

Moore, R. J., *Liberalism and Indian Politics 1872-1922*, 1966. How imperial policy on India was made and executed during Liberal administrations in London. Clearly written and well documented.

On Sir Fitzjames Stephen one original source and one commentary and background work deserve notice:

Stephen, Fitzjames, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, first pub. 1873; a new ed. by R.J. White pub. in 1968 by the Cambridge University Press. Represents the clear voice of intellectual liberalism which comes very near to pure imperialism.

Stephen, Leslie, *The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen*, 1895. A well-known nineteenth century biographer of ideas writes on Stephen's life and work.

### Radical Imperialism

Among the original sources the following may be profitably consulted:

Attlee, C.R., *The Labour Party in Perspective*, 1937.

Attlee, C.R., *As It Happened*, n.d. Supposed to be his autobiography; but irritates by its reticence on all important issues. Significant for what is omitted.

Brailsford, H.N., *Rebel India*, 1931.

Brailsford, H.N., *Democracy for India*, 1939.

Brailsford, H.N., *Subject India*, 1943. Brailsford speaks for the Socialist fringe which was very vocal but completely ineffective in influencing official Labour Party policy.

MacDonald, J.R., *Labour and Empire*, 1907. The future prime minister's early ideas.

Mill, James, Article on "Colony" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Supplement 1824. The radical view on imperialism which had so great an effect on the Utilitarians.

Rutherford, V.H., *India and the Labour Party*, 1928. Belongs to the circle of Brailsford and Brockway in the extremeness of views and impracticability of plans.

Shaw, G.B., *Fabianism and the Empire*, 1900.

For histories of and comments on the imperial attitudes of the Labour Party in particular and the Left in general the following provide much information, some coming from the Leftists themselves:

Cole, G.D.H., *A History of the Labour Party from 1914*, 1948. Detailed and almost official.

Halevy, E., *Imperialism and the Rise of Labour*, 1951.

Henderson, I., *The Attitude and Policy of the Main Sections of the British Labour Movement to Imperial Issues, 1899-1924*, University of Oxford B. Litt. thesis (unpublished), 1965.

Hyams, Edward. *The New Statesman: The History of the First Fifty Years 1913-1963*, 1963.

Labour Party, *Annual Conference Reports*, 1927-1947.

Maccoby, S., *English Radicalism, 1832-1852*, 1935. Chapter 21 is important.

Tsiang, Tingu F., *Labour and Empire: A Study of the Reaction of the British Labour, mainly as represented in Parliament, to British Imperialism since 1880*. New York, 1923.

For a running commentary on the developmet of ideas in the mind of the Left there is nothing so revealing (and at places so naive) as

Cole, Margaret (ed.), *Beatrice Webb's Diaries 1924-1932*, 1956.

**Individual Imperial Thinkers**

On Ruskin the best source is his own writings:

Ruskin, John, *Inaugural Lecture at Oxford*, 1870.

Ruskin, John, *Lectures on Art*, new ed. 1887.

On Ruskin there is not much available; the following may do:

Cook, E.T., *The Life of John Ruskin*, n.d., 2 vols.

Faber, Richard, *The Vision and the Need*, 1966.

Murray, Robert H., *Studies in English Social and Political Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1929. Has an old-world flavour, but comments on much that is neglected by others.

On John Bright there are

Bright, John, *Public Addresses*, ed. by Thomas Rogers, 1879.

Sturgis, J.L., *The Ideas and Activities of John Bright in relation to the Empire 1843-1889*, University of London M.A. thesis (unpublished), 1963.

On Lord Bryce see

Bryce, James, *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India*, 1914.

Fisher, H.A.L., *James Bryce*, 1927.

On Sir Charles Dilke:

Dilke, C., *Greater Britain*, 1868, 2 vols.

Dilke, C., *Problems of Greater Britain*, 1890.

Faber, Richard, *The Vision and the Need*, 1966.

Jenkins, Roy, *Sir Charles Dilke : A Victorian Tragedy*, 1958. A very good biography, but unfortunately does not give enough attention to his opinions on imperialism.

On Winwood Reade the only thing available is

Reade, Winwood, *The Martyrdom of Man*, 1872. It has had a remarkable staying power and has been widely read, not always for its comments on imperialism or empire.

On Edward Dicey see his articles which seem to have had considerable influence on contemporary thinking:

Dicey, Edward, "Our Route to India", June 1877.

Dicey, Edward, "The Future of Egypt", August 1877.

Dicey, Edward, "Mr. Gladstone and Our Empire", September 1877. All appeared in *The Nineteenth Century*.

On Cecil Rhodes there is no dearth of material.

Faber, Richard, *The Vision and the Need*, 1966.

Lockhart, J.G. and Woodhouse, C.M., *Cecil Rhodes: The Colossus of South Africa*, New York, 1963.

Millin, Sarah, *Cecil Rhodes*, 1933.

Stead, W.T., *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes*, 1902.

Williams, Basil, *Cecil Rhodes*, 1921. The most popular biography, reprinted several times in quick succession.

Both Gladstone and Disraeli have had more than their share of biographers, commentators, apologists and detractors. All good histories of nineteenth century Britain and British politics discuss their roles in the advance of imperialism. The following are best known:

Blake, Robert, *Disraeli*, 1966. A major biography at a lavish scale. A very readable new interpretation.

Buckle, G.E. (Moneypenny and Buckle), *Life of Disraeli*, 2-vol. ed. 1929. The old classic study.

Knaplund, P., *Gladstone and British Imperial Policy*, 1927.

Morley, John, *Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, 1903, 3 vols. Popular abridged ed. 1929. One of the longest biographies in the English language.

For character sketches of the two statesmen in quite a different vein see chapters on Gladstone and Disraeli in

Bryce, James, *Studies in Contemporary Biography*, 1927.

On Seeley the following are relevant:

Seeley, J.R., *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures*, 1883.

Faber, Richard, *The Vision and the Need*, 1966.

Murray, R.H., *Studies in English Social and Political Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1929.

Somervelle, D.C., *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 6th ed. 1950.

Thornton, A.P., *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies*, 1959.

Lord Cromer's own writings are the best guide to his ideas. See also the comments of Richard Faber.

Cromer, Lord, *Modern Egypt*, 1908.

Cromer, Lord, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, 1910.

Faber, Richard, *The Vision and the Need*, 1966.

Everything by and on Curzon is full of references to imperialism. He wrote much and has in turn attracted much commentary.

Curzon, Lord, *Russia in Central Asia*, 1889.

Curzon, Lord, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 1892.

Curzon, Lord, *Problems of the Far East*, 1894.

Curzon, Lord, *Frontiers: Romanes Lectures*, Oxford, 1907.

Curzon, Lord, *Tales of Travel*, 1923.

Curzon, Lord, *Leaves from a Viceroy's Notebook*, 1926.

Curzon, Lord, *Lord Curzon in India, 1898-1905*, 1906. Speeches delivered in India collected and introduced by Sir Thomas Raleigh.

Curzon, Lord, "The True Imperialism", *The Nineteenth Century*, January 1908.

Bodelsen, C.A., *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism*, 2nd ed. 1960.

Chirol, V., *Indian Unrest*, 1910. From the imperial point of view the finest study of India during Curzon's reign.

Dilke, David, *Curzon in India, Volume One: Achievement*, 1969; *Volume Two : Frustration*, 1970.

Edwardes, M., *High Noon of Empire : India under Curzon*, 1965. Unfriendly to Curzon. His opinions should not be accepted uncritically.

Fraser, Lovat, *India under Curzon and After*, 1911.

Menpes, M., *The Durbar*, 1903. Curzon's finest hour and the moment of his highest glory.

Middleton, Earl of, *Records and Reactions, 1856-1939*, 1939. As St. John Brodrick he was Secretary of State for India during most of Curzon's viceroyalty. He speaks with awe about his subordinate.

Mosley, L., *Curzon : The End of an Epoch*, 1960. Evocative and lively.

Ronaldshay, Earl of, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, 1928, 3 vols. The official biography on an imperial scale.

One should read Milner in the original to feel the ring of authority in his voice. Comments are useful but strictly in the second remove.

Milner, Lord, *The Milner Papers*, ed. by Headlam, 1931-33, 3 vols. Essential reading for his ideas as well as the climate of opinion in which they were developed.

Milner, Lord, *England in Egypt*, 1892.

Daniel, Norman, *Islam, Europe and Empire*, Edinburgh, 1966.

Halperin, V, *Lord Milner and the Empire*, 1952.

**Jowett and his Balliol**

Jowett's achievements at Balliol deserve more than what has been given to them. An analytical dictionary of biography of the imperial proconsuls and thinkers trained by Jowett should be a welcome addition to the library of the empire.

Faber, Geoffrey, *Jowett : A Portrait with Background*, 1957. Not a conventional biography, but rich in detail, interpretation and atmosphere. Yet does not suffice.

Amery, L.S., *My Political Life*, Vol. I, 1953. The influence of Balliol is pervasive.

Wrench, J.E., *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times*, 1955. Has much to tell of the Milner Kindergarten run under the inspiration of and by men trained under the Master.

**Jingoism**

The origin, history and implications of either the Jingo Song or the concept of Jingoism have not had an historian so far. The only sensible and careful remarks are those of Thornton.

Thornton, A.P., *For the File on Empire*, 1968. Chapter 20.

## CHAPTER 5

**Victorian Literature**

To set the scene some general studies of the Victorian age in literature are in order.

Batho, E. and Dobree, B., *The Victorians and After*, rev. ed. 1950.

Chesterton, G.K., *The Victorian Age in Literature*, 1913. Perhaps out of date now, but by a creative mind whose sweep went beyond mere literary criticism.

Houghton, W.E., *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870*, New Haven, 1957. Studies the ideas and attitudes of upper class Victorians.

Walker, Hugh, *The Literature of the Victorian Era*, Cambridge, 1910.

**Anglo-Indian Historians**

Add here the books mentioned on The Civilian Scholars in Chapter 6.

Smith, Vincent, *Early History of India*, Oxford, 1904.

Smith, Vincent, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 1911.

Smith, Vincent, *Oxford History of India*, Oxford, 1919.

Smith, Vincent, *Indian Constitutional Reform in the Light of History*, 1919. Criticism of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of reforms for India.

Smith, Vincent, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, Oxford, 1927.

Dodwell, H.H., *Nabobs of Madras*, 1926.

Dodwell, H.H. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, Cambridge, 1932, 6 vols.

Dodwell, H.H. (with J. Allan and Sir T.W. Haig), *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, Cambridge, 1943.

Hunter, W.W., *Orissa*, 1872, 2 vols.

Hunter, W.W., *The Life of the Earl of Mayo*, 1876, 2 vols.

Hunter, W.W., *The Indian Empire*, 3rd ed. 1892.

Hunter, W.W., *A History of British India*, 1899, 2 vols.

Hunter, W.W., *India of the Queen*, 1903.

Hunter also edited the multi-volume *Imperial Gazetteer* of the Government of India and the 27 volumes of the "Rulers of India" series.

For Hunter see

Skrine, F.H., *Life of Sir William Wilson Hunter*, 1901.

Lyall, A.C., *Asiatic Studies : Religious and Social*, 1882, 2 vols.

Lyall, A.C., *Warren Hastings*, 1902 ed.

Lyall, A.C., *Rise and Expansion of British Dominion in India*, 1894, 5th ed. 1910.

On Lyall there is

Hasan, Parveen, *The Political Ideas of Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall*, University of Durham M. Litt. thesis (unpublished), 1963.

Durand, H.M., *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall*, 1913.

Elphinstone, Mountstuart, *Kingdom of Cabul and its Dependencies...* 2nd ed. 1819, 2 vols.

Elphinstone, Mountstuart, *The History of India*, 1848. 9th ed. with notes and addition by E.B. Cowell 1911.

Kaye, J.W., *The Administration of the East India Company*, 1853.

Kaye, J.W., *The Life and Correspondence of Henry St. George Tucker*, 1854.

Kaye, J.W., *The Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe*, rev. ed. 1858, 2 vols.

Kaye, J.W., *Lives of Indian Officers*, 1869, 2 vols.

Kaye, J.W. (with G.B. Malleson), *History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58*, cabinet ed. 1888, 6 vols.

Lambrick, H.T., *Sir Charles Napier and Sind*, Oxford, 1952.

Lambrick, H.T., *Sind: A General Introduction ;* Vol. 1 in "History of Sind", Hyderabad (Pakistan), 1964.

Malleson, G.B., *The Founders of the Indian Empire*, 1882.

Malleson, G.B., *The Decisive Battles of India 1746-1849*, 1914.

Muir, William, *The Life of Muhammad*, 1858-61, 4 vols. New abridged ed., Edinburgh, 1923.

Muir, William, *Rise, Decline and Fall of the Caliphate*, Edinburgh, rev. ed. 1915.

Spear, T.G.P., *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India*, 1932, new ed. 1963.

Spear, T.G.P., *India, Pakistan and the West*, 1949, 4th ed. 1967.

Spear, T.G.P., *The Oxford History of Modern India 1740-1947*, Oxford, 1965 (Part III of the *Oxford History of India*).

Spear, T.G.P., *A History of India, Vol. 2* (Penguin books), 1965.

The less prolific Anglo-India historians may be mentioned together:

Caroe, Olaf, *The Pathans 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957*, 1958. An outstanding contribution to knowledge.

Cole, H.H., *Preservation of National Monuments in India*, Calcutta, 1881-85, 10 vols. A monumental pioneer work.

Crooke, W., *The North-Western Provinces of India*, 1897.

Cunningham, J.D., *History of the Sikhs*, 1849, new ed., Oxford, 1918. A work of much repute which has stood for long as the standard work.

Duff, J. Grant, *A History of the Mahrattas*, 1826, 3 vols. Reprinted in Calcutta, 1918, 3 vols. An Oxford ed. of 1921 was edited by S.M. Edwardes, 3 vols. Another work of classical proportions.

Holdich, T.H., *The Indian Borderland*, 1901.

Hughes, A.W., *The Country of Baluchistan*, 1877.

Mackay, A., *Western India*, 1853.

Trevaskis, H.K., *The Punjab of Today*, Lahore, 1931, Vol. I.

**Personal Impressions**

There are a few hundred books written by Englishmen who knew India well and in most cases loved her. Any selection is bound to be a personal choice. Some of them which have given me much pleasure are listed here:

Browning, Oscar, *Impressions of Indian Travel*, 1903.

Cadogan, Edward, *The India We Saw*, 1933. He was a member of the Indian Statutory (Simon) Commission.

Chirol, Valentine, *Indian Unrest*, 1910. Originally articles sent from India and published in *The Times*. Outstandingly perceptive, and for many years required reading for the I.C.S. probationers.

Forster, E.M., *The Hill of Devi*, 1965. The well-known novelist as companion and tutor to the ruler of a small Hindu state.

Fraser, A.H.L., *Among Indian Rajahs and Ryots*, 1911.

Fuller, B., *Some Personal Experiences*, 1930. Out-spoken account of a visit to India by a former governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam who was 'dismissed' by Minto and Morley.

Lawrence, Lady, *Indian Embers*, Oxford, n.d. Life in the Punjab *mofussil*.

Lawrence, W.R., *The India We Served*, 1928. A former Private Secretary to Curzon relates his official doings in India.

Lytton, Earl of, *Pundits and Elephants*, 1942. Bengal as seen by an aristocrat.

MacLeod, R.D., *Impressions of an Indian Civil Servant*, 1938.

Moon, Penderel, *Divide and Quit*, 1962. Bahawalpur and the Punjab during the hectic days of 1946-47. His earlier *Strangers in India* is shorter but more pungent.

O'Dwyer, M.E., *India as I Knew It 1885-1925*, 1925. The masterful governor of the Punjab in a crisis gives his version of events.

Reed, Stanley, *The India I Knew 1897-1947*, 1952. An experienced journalist's impressions of Indian life, politics and all other things.

Stephens, Ian, *The Horned Moon*, 1953. India just before and after the Partition. By a former editor of the Indian *Statesman*.

Stephens, Ian, *Monsoon Morning*, 1966. Calcutta in war time and how to run a big newspaper in an emergency.

Temple, Richard, *Men and Events of My Time in India*, 1882. He saw much and is a faithful and lively raconteur.

Yeats-Brown, F., *Lancer at Large*, 1936. Read with his earlier *Bengal Lancer*, the two books give a remarkably fresh picture of India of the English soldiers.

**Autobiographies**

Here, too, selection is difficult. The Anglo-Indians were fond of recalling their life and career, usually in satisfying detail; for which the historians ought to be thankful. The following will bring much profit and pleasure :

Clark, G.E., *My Working Life*, 1927. Gives an insight into the mind of a *pucca* Tory governor. He later became Lord Sydenham.

Darling, Malcolm, *Apprentice to Power: India 1904-1908*, 1966. A fascinating account of the life of the fresh civilian put without preparation or warning into a strange land.

Garbett, Colin, *Friend of Friend*, Oxford, 1943. Tiger hunting among other things.

Holland, Henry, *Frontier Doctor: An Autobiography*, 1958. He gave eyesight back to so many Indians that so much goodness in one man seems incredible.

Masters, John, *Bugles and a Tiger*, 1956. Life in Sandhurst and then in the Indian army. Reads like a novel and makes an impact.

Roberts, Lord, *Forty-One Years in India*, 1897, 2 vols. Soldiering in India and Afghanistan.

Temple, Richard, *The Story of My Life*, 1896, 2 vols.

Wakefield, Edward, *Past Imperative: My Life in India 1927-1947*, 1966. Administration in the *mofussil* and later residentship in a number of native states.

**Indian I.C.S. Writers**

Only one prominent person in this group is worth mentioning :

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah, *India and Europe*, n.d. 1925.

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah, *The Making of India*, 1925.

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah, *Cultural History of India*, 1940.

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah, *The Holy Quran : Text, Translation and Commentary*, Lahore, n.d., 2 vols.

**India in English Literature**

Oaten, E.E., *A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature*, 1908.

Sencourt, R., *India in English Literature*, 1923.

Tindall, W.Y., *Forces in Modern British Literature 1885-1946*, 1947.

**India in English Poetry**

Rossetti, Christina, *Works*, any ed.

Tennyson, Alfred, *Works*, any ed.

Some of the minor poets and verse writers were :

Aliph Cheem (pseud.), *Lays of Ind*, 1883, 13th ed. 1923.

Anon., *The Chutney Lyrics*, Madras, 1871.

Arnold, Edwin, *The Light of Asia, or, The Great Renunciation.*

Arnold, Edwin, *The Song Celestial.*

Arnold, Edwin, *The Indian Idylls.*

Arnold, Edwin, *The Secret of Death.*

Arnold, Edwin, *Indian Poetry.*

Arnold, Edwin, *Pearls of Faith.*

Arnold, Edwin, *The Book of Good Counsels.*

For an account of his impressions about India one may read his

Arnold, Edwin, *India Revisited, 1886.*

Davidson, John, *The Testament of an Empire Builder*, 1902.

Hutchinson, James, *The Sanyassee : An Eastern Tale and Other Poems*, Calcutta, 1840.

Lyall, A.C., *Verses Written in India, 1886.*

For how he came to write these verses and for other people's comments upon them see

Durand, Mortimer, *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall*, 1913.

Sheldon, Herbert, *The Romance of the Twisted Spears and Other Tales in Verse*, 1909.

Webb, W. Trego, *Indian Lyrics*, Calcutta, 1884.

For Edward Carpenter the following may be consulted:

Carpenter, Edward, *Towards Democracy*, 1883.

Barua, D.K., *The Life and Work of Edward Carpenter in the Light of Intellectual, Religious, Political and Literary Movements of the later half of the Nineteenth Century*, University of Sheffield Ph. D. thesis (unpublished), 1966.

**India in English Prose**

On Macaulay the following provide much information:

Dharkar, C.D. (ed.), *Lord Macaulay's Legislative Minutes*, 1946.

Macaulay, T.B., *Critical and Historical Essays*, any ed.

Macaulay, T.B., *Selected Speeches*, Oxford, n.d.

Trevelyan, G.O., *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, 1878, popular ed. 1889.

For a critical comment on Macaulay's outlook on India as evidenced in what he wrote see

Gupta, R.K. Das, "Macaulay's Writings on India" in C.H. Philips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1961.

On Sir Henry Maine there is much to be profitably read in the original:

Maine, H.J.S., *Ancient Law*, 1861.

Maine, H.J.S., *Village Communities*, 1871.

Maine, H.J.S., *The Early History of Institutions*, 1875.

Maine, H.J.S., *Early Law and Custom*, 1883.

Maine, H.J.S., *Indian Speeches and Minutes*, 1892. On Maine see :

Feaver, G.A., *From Status to Contract : A Biographical Study of Sir Henry Maine 1822-1888*, 1968.

**Imperial Ideas in English Fiction**

The problem is treated in general in the following :

Howe, S., *Novels of Empire*, New York, 1949.

Killam, G.D., *The Presentation of Africa between the Sahara and the Union of South Africa in Novels written in English, 1860-1939*, University of London Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), 1965. Later published as *Africa in English Fiction 1864-1939*, 1968.

Rahman, K., *Race Relations in English Fiction between 1919 and 1939*, University of Birmingham Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), 1963.

Sandison, Alan, *The Wheel of Empire: A Study of the Imperial Ideas in some late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Fiction*, 1967. He treats with, among others, Rider Haggard, Kipling and John Buchan.

For Sir Conan Doyle's imperial attitudes see

Doyle, Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, any ed.

Nordon, Pierre, *Conan Doyle*, 1966. This work is very detailed and by a Frenchman.

For Rider Haggard the best original source is

Haggard, Rider, *King Solomon's Mines*, any ed.

For George Alfred Henty there is something in

Henty, G.A., *On the Irrawaddy*, 1896. On the Mutiny.

Naidis, Mark, "G.A. Henty's Ideas of India", *Victorian Studies*, September 1964.

Thornton, A.P., *For the File on Empire*, 1968. Chapter 2.

**Anglo-Indian Fiction**

The most detailed survey is

Singh, Bhupal, *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction*, Oxford, 1934. It contains an extensive 26-page bibliography listing nearly all novels written by Englishmen and Englishwomen on India. Works of the following, among others, are noted here: "Afghan", W.D. Arnold, Francis W. Bain, Lily Adams Beck, Mrs. G.H. Bell ("John Travers"), Shelland Bradley, Hilton Brown, Henry Bruce, Reginald Campbell, Edmund

Candler, Sir George Chesney, Douglas Christie, Mrs. Everard Coates, Sir Edmund Cox, Mrs. B.M. Croker, Sir Henry S. Cunningham, Ethel Dell, Maud Diver, O. Douglas, Sir H.M. Durand ("John Roy"), Alice Eustace, John Eyton, R.E. Forrest, Frederick P. Gibbon, S.C. Grier ("Hilda Gregg"), Frank Haller, G.A. Henty, S. Woods Hill, W.B. Hockley, Sir J.W. Kay, John Long, Florence Marryat, C.R. Milton, Talbot Mundy, Ivan O'Beirne, P.L. Oliphant, F.E. Penny, Alice Perrin, E.W. Savi, Sir Henry Sharp, Flora Annie Steel, P. Meadows Taylor, W.M. Thackeray, Edward Thompson, S.S. Thorburn, Edmund White, P.C. Wren, and I.A.R. Wylie.

For novels published after 1934 the works of the following writers should be read:

H.E. Bates, H.E. Beal, Lesley Blanch, Brian Cooper, M.M. Kaye, Paul Scott and Philip Woodruff (Philip Mason).

For Anglo-Indian novels in general the following are useful, though by no means comprehensive :

| | |
|---|---|
| Anon., | "The Indian Mutiny in Fiction", *Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1897. |
| Bokhari, Z.A., | *A Study of Anglo-Indian Fiction*, University of Cambridge Ph. D. thesis (unpublished), 1965. |
| Hirst, W.A., | "The Empire in Fiction", *Empire Review*, February 1935. |
| Krishnaswami, P.R., | "Indian Characters in English Fiction", *Empire Review*, January 1926. |
| Singh, Nihal, | "Indians and Anglo-Indians: As Portrayed to Britons by British Novelists", *Modern Review*, Calcutta, September 1924. |

**Flora Annie Steel**

A list of her novels will be found in Bhupal Singh's *Survey* mentioned above. On Mrs. Steel I have seen only the following so far :

Patwardhan, Daya, *A Star of India : Flora Annie Steel, Her Work and Times*, Bombay, 1963. A work of much admiration and little criticism.

**Rudyard Kipling**

On Kipling's poetry some investigation is embodied in the following :

Durand, Ralph, *A Hand Book to the Poetry of Rudyard Kipling*, Garden City, New York, 1914.

Lord, L.E., "Two Imperial Poets—Horace and Kipling", *Classical Journal*, February 1921.

Stevenson, Lionel, "The Ideas in Kipling's Poetry", *University of Toronto Quarterly*, July 1932.

There is a whole library on Kipling as a story writer. The following is a severely selected list of references which I have found useful, interesting or revealing:

Anan, N.G., "Kipling's Place in the History of Ideas", *Victorian Studies*, June 1960.

Bradley, Nella, *Rudyard Kipling: Son of Empire*, New York, 1942. Good for his imperial career and ideas.

Braybrook, Patrick, *Kipling and his Soldiers*, Philadelphia, 1925.

Carrington, Charles, *The Life of Rudyard Kipling*, 1955. The standard and full biography. The work of one whose faith in the greatness of imperialism and its upholders remains undimmed.

Dobrée, Bonamy, *The Lamp and the Lute*, Oxford, 1929. Literary criticism of high order.

Edwardes, Michael, "Rudyard Kipling and the Imperial Imagination", *Twentieth Century*, June 1953.

Faith, Richardson, *Kipling's Types of Indian Characters*, University of Colorado M.A. thesis (unpublished), 1932.

Hopkins, R.T., *Rudyard Kipling : A Literary Appreciation*, New York, 1915.

Husain, I. Sajjad, *Kipling and India*, Dacca, 1964. Argues from evidence that his knowledge of India was insufficient and superficial.

Munson, Arley, *Kipling's India*, Garden City, New York, 1915.

Rao, K.B., *Rudyard Kipling's India*, Norman, 1967. A Hindu's trenchant criticism of his work and ideas.

Ray, B.L., *Kipling's Pictures of the Relations of the Two Races in India*, University of Columbia M.A. thesis (unpublished), 1931.

Robinson, E.K., "Kipling in India", *McLure's*, July 1896.

Shanks, Edward, *Rudyard Kipling: A Study in Literature and Political Ideas*, Garden City, New York, 1940.

Varley, H.L., "Imperialism and Rudyard Kipling", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, January 1953.

Wilson, Edmund, *The Wound and the Bow*, Boston, 1941. A major literary critic on his work as an artist.


**E. M. Forster**

For comments on his *A Passage to India* (1924) and related points of interest see


Cowley, Malcolm (ed.), *Writers at Wcrk*, New York, 1959. A chapter on Forster.

Deane, S.F., *The Heroes and Heroines of E.M. Forster*, Queen's University (Belfast) M. A. thesis (unpublished), 1963.

Nierenberg, Edwin, "The Withered Priestess", *Modern Language Quarterly*, June 1964.

Nirad Chaudhuri, C., "Passage to and from India", *Encounter*, June 1954.

Saleh, T.A., *The Foreign Milieu in E.M. Forster's Works*, University of Exeter M.A. thesis (unpublished), 1963.

Shonfield, Andrew, "The Politics of Forster's India", *Encounter*, January 1968.

Spencer, Michael, "Hinduism in E.M. Forster's 'A Passage to India' ", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Michigan, February 1968.

Wilde, Alan, *Art and Order : A Study of E.M. Forster*, New York, 1964.

Wilson, Agnes, "A Conversation with E.M. Forster", *Encounter*, November 1957.

**John Masters**

I have seen nothing published on Masters, which is rather odd considering the quality and range of his novels. On India he has published the following :

| | |
|---|---|
| Masters, John, | *Night Runners of Bengal*, 1951. |
| Masters, John, | *Bhowani Junction*, 1954. |
| Masters, John, | *Coromandell !* 1955. |
| Masters, John, | *Far, Far the Mountain Peak*, 1957. |
| Masters, John, | *The Venus of Konpara*, 1960. |
| Masters, John, | *To the Coral Stand*, 1962. |

**A Miner Footnote**

At least one popular thriller writer has located two of his novels in India: John Creasey. See his *The Wings of Peace* (1948) and *The Baron Goes East* (1953).

Two good novels on India have been made into films. *The Rains Came* by Louis Bromfield (probably an American writer) was a major novel first published in February 1938 and quickly reprinted seven times in four months. It dealt with the life of an Indian native state. Hollywood made a film out of it but could not do justice to the novel. John Master's *Bhowani Junction* has also been filmed but again the book is better than the film. I did not see the film made of David Walker's novel about tiger hunting, *Harry Black* (1956). A number of other films on India are beneath notice. The trend is to distort history and to be incredibly careless in technical details like costume, language and national character. A good example of this is "The North West Frontier", which was being exhibited all over London in early 'sixties, in which the Pathans of the borderland are dressed in the *dhoti* of South India.

Forster's *A Passage to India* was turned into a play and staged in London in 1960. It is a difficult story to show on the stage but it was a good attempt. If handled with care and sensibility a good film could be made out of it.

## CHAPTER 6

**India as the Centre of the British Empire**

| | |
|---|---|
| Greaves, R., | *Persia and the Defence of India*, 1960. |
| Hoskins, H.L., | *British Routes to India*, New York, 1928. |
| Hutchins, F.G., | *The Illusion of Permanence : British Imperialism in India*, Princeton, 1967. |

Kumar, R., *India and the Persian Gulf Region 1858-1907 : A Study in British Imperial Policy*, Bombay, 1966.

**Anglo-Afghan Relations and Anglo-Russian Relations in Central Asia**

Among contemporary works the following are useful:

Baxter, W.E., *England and Russia in Asia*, 1885.

Bell, Evans, *The Oxus and the Indus*, 1869.

Boulger, D.G., *England and Russia in Central Asia*, 1879, 2 vols.

Colquhoun, A.R., *Russia against India*, 1900.

Curzon, Lord, *Russia in Central Asia in 1889*, 1889.

Hanna, H.B., *The Second Afghan War*, 1899, 3 vols.

Kaye, J.W., *History of the War in Afghanistan*, 1851.

Shadbolt, S.H., *The Afghan Campaign of 1878-80*, 1882, 2 vols.

Vambery, A., *The Coming Struggle for India*, 1885.

Among recent studies in this field are:

Adamec, Ludwig W., *Afghanistan 1900 1923: A Diplomatic History*, Los Angeles, 1968. Very scholarly and correct.

Norris, J.A., *The First Afghan War 1838-1842*, Cambridge, 1967.

Singhal, D.P., *India and Afghanistan 1876-1907: A Study in Diplomatic Relations*, St. Lucia, 1963.

The outstanding book by one who saw a part of the events with his own eyes is

Fraser-Tytler, K., *Afghanistan : A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, Oxford, 1950, 3rd ed. revised by Sir M. C. Gillett, 1967.

**The Viceroyalty**

No scholar has so far made a study of this immensely important and magnificent office. The following is merely a collection of biographical essays on all the governors general and viceroys from the early beginnings to 1947:

Mersey, Viscount, *The Viceroys and Governors General of India 1757-1947*, 1949.

**The Indian Civil Service**

The following contemporary works provide a useful peep into the working of the service:

Danvers, F.C. et. al., *Memorials of Old Haileybury College*, 1894.

Horne, W.O., *Work and Sport in the Old Indian Civil Service*, 1928.

Maconachie, Evan, *Life in the Indian Civil Service*, 1926.

There are only three histories of the service:

Blunt, E.A.H., *The I.C.S.*, 1937.

O'Malley, L.S.S., *The Indian Civil Service, 1601-1930*, 1931. Straight history by a member of the service.

Woodruff, Philip, *The Men Who Ruled India : The Founders*, 1953.

Woodruff, Philip, *The Men Who Ruled India: The Guardians*, 1954.

A magnificent piece of evocative writing. Brilliant in style and content. The pseudonymn belongs to Philip Mason, a former Civilian who also wrote some good novels about India.

**Civilian Scholars**

A majority of the members of the Indian Civil Service wrote something or the other. Some of the outstanding scholars among them are mentioned here to illustrate the depth and range of their work and to support the statements made in the text :

Aitchison, Charles, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, 1892, 12 vols. A primary source of information which was never superseded.

Aitchison, Charles, *Lord Lawrence*, 1892.

Baden-Powell, B.H., *Land Systems of British India*, Oxford, 1892, 3 vols.

Baden-Powell, B.H., *A Short History of the Land Revenue and its Administration in British India*, 2nd ed. 1907, new ed. 1912 rev. by Sir Thomas Holderness.

Baden-Powell, B.H., *The Indian Village Community*, new ed., New Haven, 1957.

He laid the foundation for all later studies in Indian land and revenue problems.

| | |
|---|---|
| Colebrooke, H.T., | *Digest of Hindu Law of Contract and Succession*, Madras, 1874. |
| Colebrooke, H.T. (with Sir W. Jones), | *Digest of Hindu Law*, 1901. |

On H.T. Colebrooke see

| | |
|---|---|
| Colebrooke, T.E., | *Life of H.T. Colebrooke*, 1873. |
| Darling, Malcolm, | *The Punjab Peasant*, 1925, 3rd ed. 1932. |
| Darling, Malcolm, | *Rusticus Loquitur*, 1928. |
| Darling, Malcolm, | *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, Oxford, 1934. Sir Malcolm is the ultimate authority on the life and work of the peasant in the modern Punjab. |
| Gait, E.A., | *History of Assam*, Calcutta, 1906. |

On Sir William Jones, the so-called 'father of Indology', a number of studies have been made in recent years:

| | |
|---|---|
| Cannon, Garland, | *Oriental Jones*, 1964. |
| Hasan, R., | *A Study of Life and Works of Sir William Jones 1746 1794*, University of Durham M. Litt. thesis (unpublished), 1966. |
| Mukherjee, P., | *Sir William Jones and the Beginning of Indology*, University of London Ph. D. thesis (unpublished), 1963. |
| Mukherjee, S.N., | *Sir William Jones : A Study in British Attitudes to India in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1968. |
| Lee-Warner, W., | *The Protected Princes of India*, 1894. For long the standard work on Government of India's relations with native states. |
| Lee-Warner, W., | *Life of Lord Dalhousie*, 1904. |
| Lovett, Verney, | *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, 1920. A pioneer work which repays reading even today. |
| Malcolm, John, | *Political History of India*, 1826. |
| Marshman, J.C., | *History of India from the Earliest Period to the Close of Lord Dalhousie's Administration*, 1867, 3 vols. |

Moon, Penderel, *Warren Hastings and British India*, 1949.
O'Malley, L.S.S., *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Calcutta, 1906-12.
O'Malley, L.S.S., *History of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa under British Rule*, Calcutta, 1925.
O'Malley, L.S.S., *The Indian Civil Service 1601-1930*, 1931.
Risley, Herbert, *The People of India*, 1915.
Strachey, John, *India*, 1888.
Strachey, John, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 1892.
Thorburn, S.S., *Mussalmans and Money-Lenders*, 1886.
Thorburn, S.S., *The Punjab in Peace and War*, 1904.

This list should be read with that given in Chapter 5 relating to the work of Anglo-Indian historians.

A recent book which underlines the importance of and gives a background to the different gazetteers prepared under the guidance and instructions of the Government of India is:

Chaudhri, S.B., *History of the Gazetteers of India*, New Delhi, 1964. It contains a complete list of the Gazetteers and the names of the editors and authors of most of them.

For an intelligent comment on the attitudes and work of the Anglo-Indian Historians, particularly Macaulay, Hunter, Lyall and Strachey, see

Stokes, E.T., "The Administrators and Historical Writing on India" in C. H. Philips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1961. This collection of studies, which covers the period 1870-1905 is very useful.

## CHAPTER 7

**British Attitudes to India**

For the earlier period :

Bearce, G.D., *British Attitudes towards India 1784-1858*, Oxford, 1961.

For the later period :

Aziz, K.K., *Britain and Muslim India : A Study of British Public Opinion vis a vis the Development of Muslim Nationalism in India 1857-1947*, 1963.

For general background :

Greenberger, A.J., *The British Image of India 1880-1960 : A Study in the Literature of Imperialism*, University of Michigan Ph. D. thesis (unpublished), 1966.

**Utilitarianism and India**

The memorandum written by John Stuart Mill is still relevant, as is his better known book:

Mill, J.S., *Memorandum on the Improvement in the Administration of India during the last Thirty Years*, 1858.

Mill, J.S., *Considerations on Representative Government*, 1861.

The major figure in the application of Utilitarian theory to India is, of course, Charles Grant. We have his own word and two valuable secondary sources:

Grant, Charles, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to Morals, and on the Means of Improving It, written chiefly in the year 1792*, 1797.

Embree, A.T., *Charles Grant and British Rule in India*, 1962.

Morris, Henry, *Life of Charles Grant*, n.d.

Two modern studies examine the Utilitarian theory and its application to India in general terms:

Iyer, R., "Utilitarianism and All That: The Political Theory of British Imperialism in India" in *St. Antony's Papers*, no. 8, 1960.

Stokes, Eric, *English Utilitarians and India*, Oxford, 1959.

**Evangelicalism and India**

The moving spirit with much influence was Wilberforce:

Wilberforce, W., *An Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire*, 1823.

Coupland, R., *Wilberforce*, 2nd ed. 1945.

Ingham, K., *Reformers in India*, Cambridge, 1956.

**Christianity and India**

Claudius Buchanan led the attack against Indian superstition and official indifference to the spread of Christianity in India. His pamphlets are forcefully written:

Buchanan, C., *Memoir of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for India*, 1805.

Buchanan, C., *Christian Researches in Asia*, Boston, 1811.

Buchanan, C., *Sketch of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India*, 1813.

Buchanan, C., *An Apology for Promoting Christianity in India*, 1813.

Buchanan, C., *Memoirs of the Rev. C. Buchanan*, ed. by H. Pearson, Oxford, 1817, 2 vols.

Contemporary opinion on the role of Christianity in the course of British rule in India is reflected in the following works:

Burke, Edmund, *The Works and Correspondence*, 1852, 6 vols.

Congreve, Richard, *India : A Pamphlet published in 1857*, 1907.

Dufferin and Ava, Marquess of, *Speeches delivered in India 1884-1888*, 1890.

Durand, Mortimer, *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall*, 1913.

Heber, Reginald, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India and Letters written in India*, 3rd ed. 1828, 3 vols.

*The Life of Reginald Heber*, by his Widow, 1830.

Kaye, J.W., *Christianity in India*, 1859.

Marshman, J.C., *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward, embracing the History of the Serampore Mission*, 1859.

Martyn, Henry, *Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mohammedanism*, ed. by S. Lee, Cambridge, 1824.

Mill, James, *The History of British India*, 1820, 6 vols. 4th ed. with notes and continuation by A.H. Wilson, 1840-48, 10 vols. Wilson is forthright in challenging Mill's views on Hinduism. The original edition ought to be read to see what Mill thought.

Philips, C.H., "James Mill, Mountstuart Elphinstone, and the History of India" in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* ed. by himself, Oxford, 1961.

**Missionaries and India**

Publications of the various missionary societies and publishing houses offer authentic source material:

The Church Missionary Society put forth:

*The Indian Crisis—A Memorial to the Queen, on the Religious Policy of the Government of India*, 1858.

*Instructions of the Committee to Missionaries*, 1860.

The Church Missionary House published a series called "Occasional Papers on India". In all nine papers came out of which nos. 1, 3 and 9 are relevant:

*The Indian Crisis...*, 1858. Paper no. 1. Same as the publication of the Church Missionary Society mentioned in the last paragraph.

*Christian Missions and Government Education*, 1858. Paper no. 3.

*The Policy, as Established by Laws, of the India Government, opposed to the Neutral Policy in respect of Christianity*, n.d. Paper no. 9.

The Christian Literature Society for India (London and Madras) issued a series of "Papers for Thoughtful Moslems" of which no. 4 was :

*The Lands of Islam*, London and Madras, 1897.

There is no dearth of contemporary and recent accounts of Christian missionary activities in India. The change in the temper and approach of the nineteenth century works and modern studies is conspicuous. Important contemporary or near-contemporary works are:

Duff, Alexander, *India and Indian Missions*, Edinburgh, 1839.

Chatterton, Eyre, *History of the Church of England in India*, n.d.

Edwardes, Herbert, *Prospects of the Triumph of Christianity in India*, 1866.

Lovett, R., *History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895, 1899*, 2 vols.

Mayhew, Arthur, *Christianity and the Government of India*, 1929.

Richter, Julius, *History of Missions in India*, translated by S.H. Moore, 1908.

Russell, J., *Thoughts on Missionary Work in India*, Calcutta, 1851.

Sherring, M.A., *History of Protestant Missions in India*, 1875.

Shore, John, *Considerations on the Practicability of Communicating the Knowledge of Christ*, 1808.

Stock, E., *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 1899.

Whitehead, H., *Indian Problems*, 1924.

Recent studies include the following:

Ballhatchet, K.A., "Some Aspects of Historical Writing on India by Protestant Christian Missionaries during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", in C.H. Philips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1961.

Daniel, Norman, *Islam, Europe and Empire*, Edinburgh, 1966.

Potts, E.D., *British Baptist Missions and Missionaries in India 1793-1837*, University of Oxford D. Phil. thesis (unpublished), 1963.

Sengupta, K., *The Christian Missionaries in Bengal 1793-1833*, University of London Ph. D. thesis (unpublished), 1966.

## CHAPTER 8

### British Racial Attitudes

Of course, people did not write openly or fully about racial prejudices or attitudes, as they did about Christianity. However, there is a lot in the following books which illustrates, conceals or reveals the British attitude towards the Indians in particular and the dark Asians in general:

Angell, Norman, *The Unseen Assassins*, 1932.

Bowra, C.M., *Memories 1898-1939*, 1966.

Brogan, D.W., *The English People : Impressions and Observations*, 1943. A study of sterling worth by an Englishman on his race.

Bronte, Charlotte, *Jane Eyre*, any ed.

Cairns, H.A.C., *Race and Cultural Attitudes of the British Precursors of Imperialism in Central Africa 1840-1890*. University of Oxford D. Phil. thesis (unpublished), 1964.

| | |
|---|---|
| Dilke, Charles, | *Greater Britain*, 1868, 2 vols. |
| Farwell, Byron, | *Burton: A Biography of Sir Richard Francis Burton*, 1963. |
| Heber, Bishop R., | *Narrative of a Journey...*, 3rd ed. 1828, 3 vols. |
| Nicolson, Harold, | *King George V : His Life and Reign*, 1952. |
| Pelly, Lewis (ed.), | *The Views and Opinions of Brigadier General John Jacob, C.B.*, 1858. |
| Shore, John, | *Notes on Indian Affairs*, 1837. |
| Spear, T.G.P., | *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in the Eighteenth Century India*, 1932, new paperback reprint 1963. |
| Thompson, Edward, | *The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe*, 1937. |
| Trevelyan, G.O., | *Cawnpore*, 1910. |
| Woodruff, Philip, | *The Men Who Ruled India : The Founders*, 1953. |
| Woodruff, Philip, | *The Men Who Ruled India : The Guardians*, 1954. |

**Public Schools as Moulders of Imperial Attitudes**

| | |
|---|---|
| Archer, R.L., | *Secondary Education in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1921. |
| Barker, Ernest, | *National Character and the Factors in its Formation*, 1927. Full of much wisdom and insight. |
| Drage, Geoffrey, | *Eton and the Empire*, Eton, 1890. |
| Gray, Herbert B., | *The Public School and the Empire*, 1913. |
| Gray, Herbert B., and Turner, Samuel, | *Eclipse or Empire* ? 1916. |
| Minchin, J.G. Cotton, | *Old Harrow Days*, 1898. |
| Minchin, J.G. Cotton, | *Our Public Schools: Their Influence on English History*, 1901. |
| Thornton, A.P., | *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies*, 1959. |

**British Criticism of British Attitudes**

| | |
|---|---|
| Arbuthnot, A.J., | *Sir Thomas Munro: Selections from his Minutes and other Official Writings*, 1881, 2 vols. |

Cole, G.D.H. and Margaret (eds.), *The Opinions of William Cobbett*, 1944.

Dilke, Charles, *Greater Britain*, 1868, 2 vols.

Hake, A.E. (ed.), *The Journals of Major-General C.G. Gordon of Khartoum*, 1885.

Morel, E.D., *Africa and the Peace of Europe*, 1917.

Morley, John, *Life of Cobden*, 1881, 2 vols.

Smith, Goldwyn, *The Empire*, 1863.

## CHAPTER 9

**Eradication of Indian Social Evils**

Ballhatchet, K.A., *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India*, 1957.

Cadell, Patrick, *History of the Bombay Army*, 1938.

Edwardes, Michael, *British India 1772-1947: A Survey of the Nature and Effects of Alien Rule*, 1967. Contains some gruesome details of the practice of certain social evils.

Moore, W.R., *Hindu Infanticide*, 1860.

Nath, P., *The Practice of Female Infanticide in India and its Suppression in the North Western Provinces*, University of London Ph. D. thesis (unpublished), 1965.

Sleeman, W.H., *Report... on the Thug Gangs*, Calcutta, 1840. One of those official reports which read like fiction; but cruel in detail.

Somerville, A., *Crime and Religious Belief in India*, Calcutta, 1931.

Taylor, Meadows, *Confessions of a Thug*, 1840, 3 vols., World's Classics ed. 1933. A classic description.

Taylor, Meadows, *The Story of My Life*, ed. by his Daughter, 1877, 2 vols. Essential reading for understanding the story of the suppression of Thugi.

Thompson, Edward, *Sati*, 1928.

Thornton, Edward, — *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, 1837. Should form a companion volume to Meadows Taylor's book.

Wilson, J., — *History of the Suppression of Infanticide in Western India*, 1855.

Woodruff, Philip, — *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, 1953.


**British Influence on Indian Education**


Grisewood, Herman (ed.), — *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians: An Historic Revaluation of the Victorian Age*, 1949. A collection of broadcasts on the B.B.C. Third Programme covering all aspects of Victorian life by eminent authorities.

Howell, A., — *Education in British India prior to 1854 and in 1870-71*, Calcutta, 1872.

James, H.R., — *Education and Statesmanship in India 1797-1910*, 1911.

Mayhew, Arthur, — *The Education of India: A Study of British Educational Policy, 1835-1920, and of its bearing on National Life and Problems of India Today*, 1926.

Rathore, J.S., — *The Contribution of the Methodist Colleges to Higher Education in India*, University of Indiana Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), 1964.

Tangri, Shanti S., — "Intellectuals and Society in Nineteenth Century India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, July 1961.

Thomas, F.W., — *The History and Prospects of British Education in India*, 1891.


**British Influence on Indian Languages and Literatures**


Chatterjee, Atul and Burn, Richard, — *British Contributions to Indian Studies*, 1943.

Derret, M.E., — *The Modern Indian Novel: A Comparative Approach*, Brussells, 1960.

Rao, G.S., *Indian Words in English: A Study in Indo-British Cultural Relations*, Oxford, 1954.

Sadiq, Muhammad, *A History of Urdu Literature*, Karachi, 1965.

Spencer, Dorothy M., *Indian Fiction in English: An Annotated Bibliography*, Philadelphia, 1960.

Thomas, F.W., "Language and Literature" in G.T. Garratt (ed.), *The Legacy of India*, Oxford, 1937.

**British Impact on India : General**

In the main, these books deal with the nature and scale of the British impact but they also contain some material on the Indian reaction to this impact.

Clyde, P.H., *The Far East: A History of the Impact of the West on Eastern Asia*, New York, 3rd ed. 1958.

Edwardes, Michael, *British India 1772-1947: A Survey of the Nature and Effects of Alien Rule*, 1967.

Garratt, G.T., "Indo-British Civilization" in G.T. Garratt (ed.), *The Legacy of India*, Oxford, 1937. An optimistic account.

Griffiths, P.J., *The British Impact on India*, 1952. 2nd ed. 1965. A large work covering all aspects of Indian life.

Morrison, John, *New Ideas in India During the Nineteenth Century*, Edinburgh, 1906.

O'Malley, L.S.S. and Wint, Guy, *India and the West*, 1941. One of the best treatments written during British rule.

Prasad, H., *Influence of European Political Doctrines on the Evolution of Indian Governmental Institutions and Practice 1858-1938*, University of London Ph. D. thesis (unpublished), 1941.

Rawlinson, H.G., "India in European Literature and Thought", in G.T. Garratt (ed.), *The Legacy of India*, Oxford, 1937.

Rawlinson, H.G., *The British Achievement in India: A Survey*, 1947.

Spear, T.G.P., *India, Pakistan and the West*, Oxford, 1949, 4th ed. paperback 1967. It must be remembered that this is an Englishman's analysis.

Wint, Guy, *The British in Asia*, 1947. At places very penetrating.

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah, *India and Europe: A Study of Contrasts with a view to discovering Avenues of Cultural Co-operation*, n.d.? 1925.

**British Impact on India: The Muslims**

Ahmad, Aziz, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford, 1964.

Ahmad, Aziz, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964*, Oxford, 1967.

Ameer Ali, Sayyid, *The Spirit of Islam*, 1891, rev. ed. 1922.

Aziz, K.K., *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism*, 1967.

Aziz, K.K., *Ameer Ali: His Life and Work*, Lahore, 1968.

Baljon, J.M.S. (Jr.), *The Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, Leiden, 1949, 2nd rev. ed. Lahore, 1958.

Dar, B.A., *Religious Thought of Syed Ahmad Khan*, Lahore, 1957.

Graham, G.F.I., *Reviews on Syed Ahmad Khan's Life and Works*, Aligarh 1886.

Graham, G.F.I., *The Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, K.C.S.I.*, 1909.

Iqbal, Muhammad, *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1930.

Lutfullah, *Autobiography of Lutfullah*, ed. by Edward B. Eastwick, 1857. Lutfullah visited London in 1844 and here relates his impressions of the English. Delightful reading.

Smith, W.C., *Modern Islam in India*, 1946. A professedly Marxist analysis. Biased and superficial but contains some information not available elsewhere.

Vahid, S.A., *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, 1959. Chapters 4 and 12 examine his debt to Western thought and ideas.

**British Impact on India : The Hindus and Others**

Chaudhuri, Nirad C., *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, 1951. An outstanding testament to British influence.

Chaudhuri, Nirad C., "The Impact of England", *Listener*, 23 November 1967. A valid point rather exaggerated.

Collett, S.D. (ed.), *Life and Letters of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, 3rd ed. Calcutta, 1962, ed. by J.K. Biswas and P. K. Ganguly.

Farquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, New York, 1918. Indian reprint, Delhi, 1967. A work of much scholarship and labour. Brings out the influence of the West in the reform programmes of several Hindu sects.

Mookerjee, H.K., *The Indian Image of Nineteenth Century Europe*, Bombay, 1967. A good example of the Indian habit of reading Indian influence where there was none. For the "Indian" read "Hindu".

Nag, K. and Burman, D. (eds.), *Collected English Works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, Calcutta, 1946.

Panikkar, K.M., *Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498-1945*, 1953. Paperback reprint 1961. Parts vii and viii deal with European influence on Asia. A senior Hindu historian's views.

## CHAPTER 10

Oddly enough no work at all has been done on the predicament of the Westernized Asian. The only serious study is :

Shils, Edward, *The Intellectual between Tradition and Modernity : The Indian Situation*, The Hague, 1961.

**A Tail-End Note**

The every-day life, pleasures and problems of the English in India have been recorded with rare skill, detail and wit. This may not be

history in the conventional sense, but it is a primary source of history. Some of the outstanding books are mentioned here for the benefit of those whom curiosity impels to see the 'moving feast' of British imperial rule in India through the eyes of reliable witnesses :


| | |
|---|---|
| Anderson, P., | *The English in Western India*, 1856. |
| Anon., | *Life in the Mofussil, or, The Civilian in Lower Bengal*, 1878. |
| Atkinson, G.F., | *Curry and Rice, on Forty Plates: The Ingredients of Social Life at "Our" Station in India*, 1859. Recreates Anglo-Indian society with a sure touch. |
| Bell, Evans, | *The English in India : Letters from Nagpur*, 1859. |
| Brown, Hilton, | *The Sahibs : The Life and Ways of the British in India as Recorded by Themselves*, 1948. |
| Carey, W.H., | *The Good Old Days of the Hon'able John Company*, Calcutta, 1906, 2 vols. Covers the years 1600-1858. |
| Crawford, John, | *Letters from British Settlers in the Interior of India descriptive of their own Condition and that of the Native Inhabitants under the Government of the East India Company*, 1831. |
| D'Oyley, Williamson and Bladgon. | *The European in India*, 1813. |
| Kincaid, Denis, | *British Social Life in India 1608-1937*, 1938. |
| Moon, Penderel, | *Strangers in India*, 1944. A more modern observation, but no less revealing. |
| Pritchard, Iltudus, | *The Chronicles of Budgepore*, 1893. Life at a small 'station'. |
| Roberts, Emma, | *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan : Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society*, 1835, 2 vols. |
| Stanford, J.K. (ed.), | *The Memsahibs' India, 1790 1860*, 1962. How the much maligned English-woman lived and had her being in nineteenth-century India. |

## LONGER NOTES


Amery, L.S., *My Political Life*, Vol. I, 1953.

Andrew, W.P., *Our Scientific Frontier*, 1880.

Arberry, A.J., *Oriental Essays : Portraits of Seven Scholars*, 1960.

Arnold-Foster, H.P., *History of England*, 1904.

Arnold-Foster, H.P., *The Citizen Reader*, 1904.

Bartlett, C.J. ed., *Britain Pre-Eminent*, 1969.

Beloff, Max, *Imperial Sunset, Vol. I: Britain's Liberal Empire 1897-1921*, 1969.

Belyaev, C.A., *Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages*, 1969.

Bose, S.K., *Capital and Labour in Indian Tea Industry*, Bombay, 1954.

Bradley, Kenneth, ed., *The Living Commonwealth*, 1961.

British Government, *Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)*, Parliamentary Papers, 1837, Vol. VII (1).

British Government, *Parliamentary Papers* (1907), LVI, Cd. 3288.

British Government, *Imperial Conference—Minutes and Proceedings*, 1911. Cd. 5745.

Bruce, H., *English History in Contemporary Poetry*, 1914.

Bryant, Arthur, *Triumph in the West*, 1959.

Bryant, Arthur, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 1969.

Buckle, G.E. ed., *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, Series 3, 1930.

Burton, Isabell, *Life of Captain Sir Richard Burton*, 1893, 2 vols.

Burton, Richard F., *Scinde or The Unhappy Valley*, 1851.

Buxton, Charles, ed., *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Baronet, with Selections from his Correspondence*, 1848.

Buxton, Thomas Fowell, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy*, 1840.

Campbell-Johnson, A., *Viscount Halifax : A Biography*, 1941.

*Cassell's Illustrated History of England*, 1906, 10 vols.

Chamberlain, Austen, *Politics from Inside : An Epistolary Chronicle 1906-1914*, 1936 ed.

Cole, Margaret, *The Story of Fabian Socialism*, 1961.

Colebrooke, T.E., *Life of the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinston*, 1884.

*Collin's Story of Britain*, 1905. *Collin's Young Briton's History Readers*, 1905, 3 vols.

Conservative Commonwealth Council, *Colonial Rule*, 1955.

Crow, C., *Harris of Japan*, 1939.

Crowder, Michael, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, 1968.

Cunningham, Audrey, *William Cunningham : Teacher and Priest*, 1950.

Cunningham, William, *The Case against Free Trade*, 1911.

Curtin, Philip D., *The Image of Africa : British Ideas and Actions 1780-1850*, 1965.

Das, Durga, *India from Curzon to Nehru and After*, 1969.

Das, Mohan, *Communist Activity in India 1925-1950*, Bombay, 1951.

Deffontaines, *Geographie et religions*, Paris, 1948.

Delavignette, R., *Christianisme et colonialisme*, Paris, 1960.

DeWitt, Jr., C.E., Lord Milner's 'Kindergarten' : The British Round Table Group and the Movement for Imperial Reform 1910-1918, unpublished Washington University Ph.D. thesis, 1962.

Dilke, C.W. and Wilkinson, S., *Imperial Defence*, 1897 rev. ed.

Dilke, David, *Curzon in India, Vol. II : Frustration*, 1970.

Druhe, David N., *Soviet Russia and Indian Communism*, New York, 1959.

Edwardes, Lady, *Memorials of the Life and Letters of Major-General Sir Herbert B. Edwardes*, 1886.

Edwardes, Michael, *The West in Asia 1850 1914*, 1967.

Edwardes, Michael, *Bound to Exile : The Victorians in India*, 1969.

Elliot, J.G., *The Fronier 1839-1947 : The Story of the North-West Frontier of India*, 1968.

Endacott, G.B., *A History of Hong Kong*, Oxford, 1958. *Everyman's Encyclopaedia*, 1949-50 ed.

Folson, A., *The Royal Empire Society : Formative Years*, 1933.

Forrest, Denys, *The Oriental : Life Story of a West End Club*, 1968.

Fraser, George Macdonald, ed., *Flashman : From the Flashman Papers 1839-1842*, 1969.

Fryer, P., *Mrs. Grundy : Studies in English Prudery*, 1965 ed.

Gaunt, Mary E., *Notes from a Diary 1851-1872*, 1911.

Gaunt, Mary E., *Alone in West Africa*, 1912.

Glubb, John Bagot, *Syria, Lebanon, Jordan*, 1967.

Green, Graham, ed., *The Old School*, 1934.

Grigson, Geoffrey, ed., *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Modern World Literature*, 1963.

Grogan, E.S., and Sharp, A.H., *From Cape to Cairo*, 1900.

Gross, John, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, 1969.

Groves, C.P., *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, 1948-58, 4 vols.

Hancock, I.R., The 1911 Imperial Conference, unpublished Oxford University B. Phil. thesis, 1964.

Hankey, Lord, *The Supreme Command 1914-1918*, 1961, 2 vols.

Haslip, Joan, *The Sultan : The Life of Abdul Hamid*, 1958.

Hickinbotham, T., *Aden*, 1958.

Hill, Richard, *Slatin Pasha*, 1965.

Hirst, F.W., et. al., *Liberalism and the Empire*, 1900.

James, Robert Rhodes, *Churchill : A Study in Failure 1900-1939*, 1970.

Jones, Thomas, *Whitehall Diary, Vol. I, 1916-1925*, 1969.

Kane, J.H., *The Progress of World Wide Missions*, 1960 ed.

Kendle, J.E., *Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911*, 1967.

Kenya, Government of, *Kenya Education Commission Report*, Nairobi, 1964.

Kidd, Benjamin, *Social Evolution*, 1894.

Kidd, Benjamin, *The Control of the Tropics*, 1898.

Kidd, Benjamin, *Individualism and After*, Oxford, 1908.

Kiernan, V.G., *The Lords of Human Kind*, 1969.

Kimche, Jon, *The Second Arab Awakening*, 1970.

Kingsley, Mary, *Travels in West Africa*, 1897.

Kingsley, Mary, *West African Studies*, 1899.

Kingston, W.H.G., *The Three Midshipmen*, 1873 ed.

Knox, Robert, *The Races of Man*, 1862.

Labilliere, F.P., *Federal Britain*, 1894.

Labour Party, British, *The Colonies : The Labour Party's Post-War Policy for the African and Pacific Colonies*, 1943.

Laird, M.A., ed., *Bishop Heber in Northern India : Selections from Heber's Journal*, Cambridge, 1970.

Langworthy, Emily Booth, *This Africa was Mine*, Stirling, 1952.

Lee, J.M., *Colonial Development and Good Government*, Oxford, 1967.

Lenin, V.I., *Imperialism : The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 1947 ed.

Lewis, Roy, and Foy, Yvonne, *The British in Africa*, 1971.

Locke, J. Courtenay, ed., *The First Englishmen in India*, New York, 1970.

Lucy, H.W., *East by West*, 1885 ed., 2 vols.

Macartney, Lord, *An Embassy in Japan*, ed. by J.L. Cranmer-Byng, 1967.

MacDonald, Ramsay, *Labour and the Empire*, 1907.

Mackinder, Halford, *The World War and After*, 1924.

Maitland, J.C., *Letters from Madras by a Lady*, 1843.

Mansergh, Nicholas, *The Multi-Racial Commonwealth*, 1955.

Marshall, P.J., ed., *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1970.

Mineka, Francis E., ed., *The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill 1812-1848*, Toronto, 1963, 2 vols.

Misra, B.B., *The Indian Middle Classes*, 1961.

Monroe, Elizabeth, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1956*, 1963.

Morel, E.D., *Nigeria : Its Peoples and Problems*, 1912.

Murray, Gilbert, *From the League to the United Nations*, 1948.

Neill, Stephen, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, 1966.

Oliver, Roland, *African History for the Outside World*, 1964.

Olivier, Sydney, *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, 1906.

Olliver, M., *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences from 1887 to 1937*, Ottawa, 1954, 3 vols.

Osborn, S., *The Past and Future of British Relations with China*, Edinburgh, 1860.

Paine, Thomas, *The Rights of Man*, ed. by H. B. Bonner, 1907.

Pearson, E.S., *Karl Pearson : An Appreciation of some Aspects of his Life and Work*, Cambridge, 1938.

Pearson, Karl, *The Ethics of Free Thought*, 1901.

Pearson, Karl, *Natural Life from the Standpoint of Science*, 1905.

Pease, Edward, *A History of the Fabian Society*, 1916.

Percy, W.S., *The Empire Comes Home*, 1937.

Porter, Bernard, *Critics of Empire*, 1968.

Prasad, Bisheshwar, ed., *Ideas in History*, Bombay, 1968.

Roberts, John S., *A Land Full of People : Life in Kenya Today*, 1967.

Roberts, P.E., *India under Wellesley*, 1929.

Robinson, R., et. al., *Africa and the Victorians : The Official Mind of Imperialism*, 1961.

Rose, Kenneth, *Superior Person*, 1969.

Rose, Saul, *Britain and South-East Asia*, 1962.

Rosebery, Lord, *Miscellanies : Literary and Historical*, 1921, 2 vols.

Satow, E., *A Diplomat in Japan*, 1921.

Sauvaget, Jean, *Introduction to the History of the Muslim East : A Bibliographical Guide*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965.

Searight, Sarah, *The British in the Middle East*, 1969.

Shaw, G.B., ed., *Fabianism and the Empire : A Manifesto by the Fabian Society*, 1900.

Shields, R.A., The Quest for Empire Unity : The Imperial Federationists and their Cause 1869-1893, unpublished Pennsylvania University Ph.D. thesis, 1961.

Simmons, Jack, *Britain and the World*, 1965.

Social Survey, The, *Public Opinion on Colonial Affairs*, 1948.

Stocqueler, J.H., *Handbook to India*, 1844.

Strachey, John, *The End of Empire*, 1959.

Strachey, J. St. Loe, *The Citizen and the State*, 1904.

Sykes, C., *Cross Roads to Israel*, 1965.

Teed, Peter, and Clark, Michael, eds., *Portraits and Documents : Later Nineteenth Century 1868-1919*, 1969.

Trevelyan, G.O., *Competition Wallah*, 1866 ed.

Tripathi, Amales, *The Extremist Challenge*, Bombay, 1967.

Ular, A., *A Russo-Chinese Empire*, Paris, 1902, Eng. ed. 1904.

Wakeman, F., *Strangers at the Gate : Social Disorder in South China 1839-1861*, Los Angeles, 1961.

Walmsley, H.M., *Sketches of Algeria during the Kabyle War*, 1858.

Walrond, Theodore, ed., *Letters and Journals of James, Eighth Earl of Elgin*, 1872.

Ward, W., *A View of the History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindoos*, 1822, 3 vols.

Webb, Beatrice, *Our Partnership*, ed. by Barbara Drake and Margaret Cole, 1948.

Wint, Guy, *The British in Asia*, 1947.

Young, G.M., *Victorian England : Portrait of an Age*, New York, 1953 ed.

# Index